

TLA'AMIN HOUSING ARCHITECTURE  
AND HOME TERRITORIES  
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:  
INVISIBLE SPACES SHAPING HISTORICAL INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

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By

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## **Abstract**

A revolution took place in Sliammon, BC, between the late 1800s and 1970s. As with colonialism elsewhere in Canada, this included changes in Indigenous religion, health, governance, and every other mechanism of life, including architecture. By the 1970s, the Tla'amin, who were once longhouse people, came to live in two-level former military base houses from Ladner, BC. Using oral history holdings at the former Sliammon Treaty Office and personal interviews, the impact that changes in housing architecture had on individual, family, community life and relationships to environmental territories, is reviewed. Tla'amin housing is first seen as a site for displaying personal power and territory, both physically and metaphorically in stories. Through decades of housing architecture changes, including a transition to single-family dwellings and then to segregated spaces, including bedrooms, consequent shifts in power and authority impeded the ability to pass on cultural knowledge through intergenerational sharing, which once happened in open spaces within the longhouse or one-room shack. Additionally, residential school attendance disrupted family relationships and transformed how Tla'amin young people carried out coming of age ceremonies. Throughout these challenges, Tla'amin people used strategies to maintain cultural continuity and Indigenous knowledge, including emphasizing accessible ceremonies, enforcing intergenerational relationships, ensuring strong connections to their territories and natural environments both through travel and symbolism, and encouraging youth to maintain knowledge that could be found in the environments and within themselves.

This dissertation examines the Tla'amin relationship to created and natural spaces, developing a deeper understanding of human–architecture and human-land relationships. Additionally, it demonstrates historical approaches to Indigenous education. The Tla'amin have their own residential school stories, and this dissertation reveals some of them, and the impact these particular experiences had on the community. Oral history is extensively used.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to the people of Tla'amin, who made me feel like family, to their ancestors and people to come, and to my own grandmothers, Madelaine Moyah and Ruth Marie Butt, and all of my grandmothers and grandfathers who came before.

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## Introduction

This study is tightly bound by the Canadian government's attempt to place the Coast Salish Tla'amin people on one designated spot, Indian Reserve #1, between 1910 and 1915. Although I went on several tours of Tla'amin territory, this is the social and physical geography with which I became most familiar. Although commonly called Sliammon after an early rendition of the name of the Nation and its people, the village is more correctly *Te Shoh Sum*, referring to the white foam of herring eggs that would collect near the beach from February to April.<sup>1</sup> Tla'amin territory expands from Stillwater on the British Columbian mainland and part of Texada Island to north of Desolation Sound and Cortes Island. Currently, Tla'amin people control over 609,000 hectares of this traditional territory. They hold direct governance and ownership over more than 8,322 hectares, through their treaty agreement with the federal government, which received royal assent on June 19, 2014. Tla'amin history is now intertwined with colonial land greed and its administrative manifestations, but how the people experience their land remains connected to the way their ancestors did. I was never able to develop the kind of intimacy with the land that produced this story:

Well, the two, the two rivers up in Toba. They were medicine, the one falls that comes off the bluff there, by Salmon Bay before you turn around to go to Brem River, we were not supposed to look at the top. "You boys, don't be looking up there. It's not your job to look up there," they said. We would look at the bottom of the waterfall. The waterfall splits, it goes into three, because when you look at the top it looks like a girl's parts at the top. But that water, its [sic] medicine for girls, if you have cramps and that. Girl stuff. They drink that water and it makes

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<sup>1</sup> Sliammon, also called *Te Shoh Sum*, is the current community site, whereas Tla'amin is the name of the Nation and people.

them better, that's a girl's medicine. "Don't drink too much, you'll get a high voice," they used to tell us. But there's another stream or little waterfall that happens up there, but it comes off at the end of a rock and it comes like man's parts. If a girl drank that water, she was guaranteed to have a boy.<sup>2</sup>

This story describes a location deep in Tla'amin territory. A teaching was shared here, tied intimately to the sites' appearances and physical properties. This teaching developed in its listeners a respect for the land itself personified as a living woman, and the territory where it could be found reinforced an understanding of gender roles and medicines with every visit. The land literally "guaranteed" the continuation of Tla'amin lives, because if "a girl drank that water, she was guaranteed to have a boy." If Tla'amin people remembered their sites and teachings, the Nation would continue.

### *Chapter Sketch*

My inability to build this relationship to Tla'amin territory is not a new or even unsurprising phenomenon given the research that I am about to share. Although I fault myself for not spending enough time with either the Tla'amin people or their territory, my personal story fits into the one I am about to tell, and is perhaps the reason that I chose to write it. The first two chapters begin in the most intimate territory for any person: the house. They examine the relationship Tla'amin people may have had to their houses based on observations from outsiders and then, from the turn of the century until the early 1970s, on oral histories about the type of houses that Tla'amin people built and lived in. This history demonstrates that for the Tla'amin people in the nineteenth century, housing, notably longhouses, helped to demonstrate status in the community and delineate where certain powerful families lived. In time, colonial interventions created different avenues for status that were also depicted in Tla'amin housing. Through this time period, Tla'amin people continued to use their houses to reflect their status in terms of family size and wealth. Finally, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, colonial

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<sup>2</sup> P8, interviewed by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 9.

interventions, particularly the shipping of entire army-base houses from Ladner, BC, completely overwrote the Tla'amin ability to reflect their own social systems in their housing.

In Chapter Two, a story about Mink and Wolf, captured in print in both 1969 and 1979, demonstrates that the Tla'amin house had meaning beyond status. The Mink and Wolf story helps to describe the uses of the Tla'amin house as a site of personal territory and control, as a ceremonial site, and as a place where ceremony, kinship, and spirituality came together. The changes to the architecture of Tla'amin houses fractured the relationship between the house and these values and activities, forever changing the role of the house in Tla'amin society and, consequently, disturbing the very practices that were interwoven into the structure of the longhouse. This story further demonstrates the operation of the Tla'amin Indigenous education system, how messages of behaviour, cultural expectations, and environment were passed on in interactions between Elders and children.<sup>3</sup>

This education system was also tied to the Tla'amin house, as a longhouse kept extended families of various ages in one space, sharing hearths and stories. Chapter Three reviews how housing changes throughout the twentieth century. The introduction of single-family houses and separate bedrooms, for example, challenged Tla'amin Elders' ability to share their knowledge with younger generations. Despite this challenge of space within family houses, Elders adapted strategies to bring families and generations together, to ensure that Indigenous knowledge was maintained. Tla'amin territory, an ever-present site for teachings, became even more important as Indigenous Tla'amin education was challenged within the house through its very structure.

Residential schools physically dislocated Tla'amin children and youth from their community, cleaving even greater divisions between parents and their children. They embodied the culmination of the effects of an increasingly alien home environment on Tla'amin education. Chapter Four compares Tla'amin Indigenous education with the residential school experience, and assesses how the radically different space of the

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<sup>3</sup> Although not every Elder is knowledgeable about Indigenous ceremonies and protocol, I have retained the capital "E" Elder usage throughout to acknowledge respect for their experiences.

residential school changed the lived experience and cultural reality of the generations on which it was imposed. Elders intervened to maintain the best possible connection to their teachings by utilizing territorial spaces and symbols that brought Indigenous teachings inside newly structured Tla'amin houses.

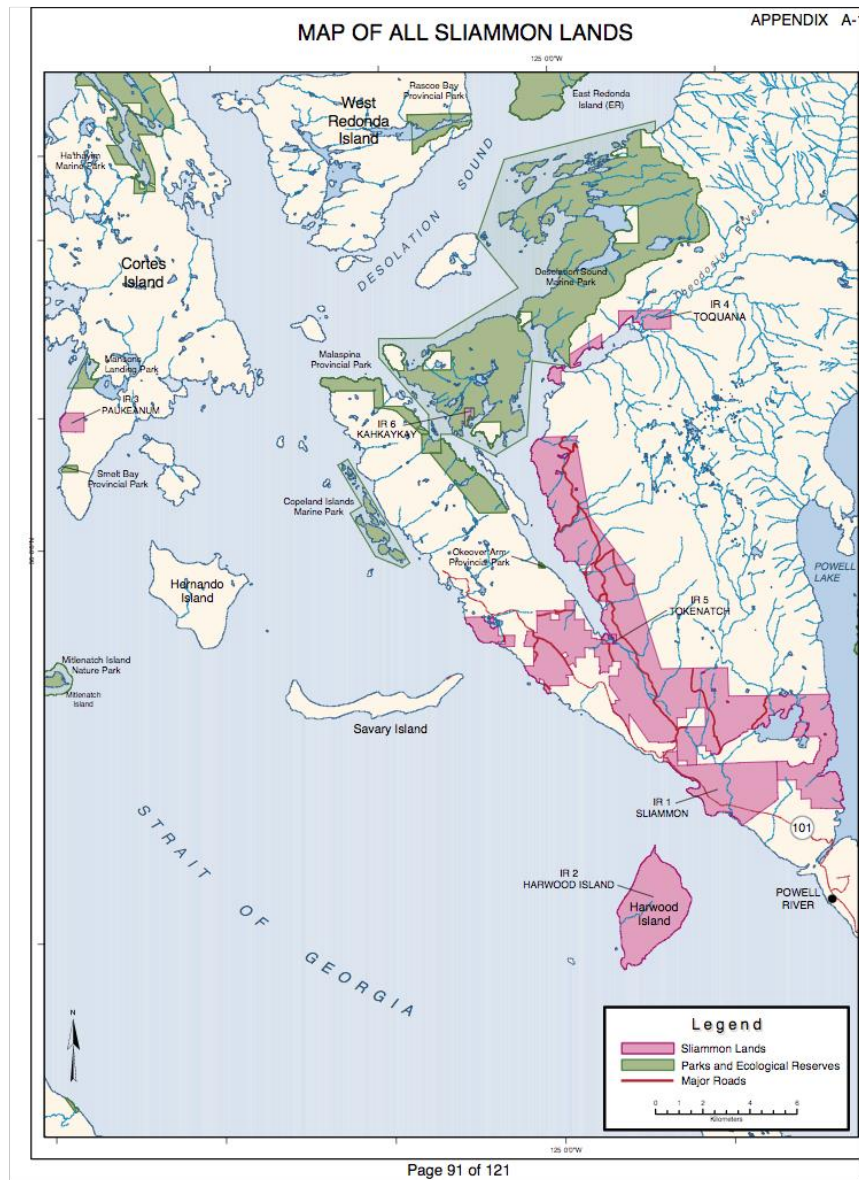


Figure 0.1. Map of All Tla'amin Lands, 2006<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Map of All Sliammon Lands," map, Tla'amin, British Columbia, and Canada, *Sliammon First Nation Agreement in Principle*, 2006, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://bctreaty.net/nations/agreements/SliammonAIP.pdf>.



Figure 0.2. Sliammon from the Air, circa 2015<sup>5</sup>

### *Methodology*

Having buried my nose in books for the better part of the last twenty-eight years, I was considerably more comfortable with the text-based aspects of the analysis required for this work than I was with other people-focussed research components. And yet I chose my supervisor and this particular degree program for the opportunity to learn from and listen to Indigenous Elders. As a bibliophile I benefitted immensely from the access I was

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<sup>5</sup> “Sliammon main village has approximately 200 houses,” photo, Sliammon Treaty Society, *Lands and Resources Gallery*, January 23, 2013, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.sliammontreaty.com/?cat=18>.

provided into the earlier recorded and transcribed oral history collection that the Sliammon Treaty Society has maintained since the late 1960s. This was an incredible treat, as well as an important lesson in the difference between oral and written communication. The story shared in Chapter Two is clearly limited by its context on paper, and shortened significantly by the Elder who shared it. I spent a lot of time with this oral history collection, reading the transcriptions thoroughly for themes on housing and the use of space. Houses and the use of space within them are not common themes.

I was less successful in my research into archival sources, finding that many of the early Indian Affairs documents focussed on the business of lumber. In comparison, the McKenna–McBride Royal Commission in 1915 meant to settle the “Indian land question” in British Columbia offered illuminating words on housing from Tla’amin leaders. Chapter One makes the most use of archival material, with accounts of early Tla’amin housing from Captain George Vancouver’s voyage in 1792, and letters between the Vicariate of British Columbia and its man on the ground, Reverend Father Martinet, in the 1880s. Dr. Basil Nicholson, who primarily acted as a teacher in Sliammon, has a diary kept at the Powell River Historical Museum and Archives (PRHMA). Dr. Nicholson recorded limited insights into Tla’amin happenings in this diary. The PRHMA has also more recently begun some oral history collection with Tla’amin members, and these were used as well. Anthropologist Homer Barnett’s two publications, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* and *Culture Element Distributions IX: Gulf of Georgia Salish*, were also very useful.

The part of my research that spoke to my soul, in addition to reading the oral history collections, was meeting with Tla’amin Elders between 2011 and 2015. In 2012 and 2013 I was a field school instructor with the Tla’amin - University of Saskatchewan / Simon Fraser University Field School, but I did not yet feel confident enough to ask focused questions relating to my own research while I was working to support junior students. The collective field school had different ethics requirements from those that I had been given as an individual student by the Sliammon Cultural Committee. The Cultural Committee asked me to ensure the anonymity of all the interviewees in my

work, whereas the field school students in their projects were allowed to identify names if the individual interviewees agreed. I appreciate the requirements since the community is small and some of the words Elders shared with me related to my research project were highly personal.<sup>6</sup> I have adopted the principles of “Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession” (OCAP) in my research.<sup>7</sup> In 2011 I met with six Elders, and in 2015 I was able to conduct an additional fourteen interviews. During the course of my dissertation project two Elders withdrew their participation. Throughout these meetings I began with open-ended questions but found that the abstract concept of people’s social relationships to space, and particularly to the house, generally did not translate well into an informal interview. Instead, in the second round of interviews I shared what I had learnt to that point, largely from the previously collected oral histories, and asked Elders to share their perspectives, as they might differ. This was a much more fruitful and fulfilling approach.

The total oral history accessed for this project is vast including efforts by the Sliammon Treaty Society and many community members past and present, anthropologists Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy, and the PRHMA. I reviewed, at a minimum, 87 interviews held as transcripts and some tapes by the Sliammon Treaty Society, dating between approximately 1979 and 2003. Twenty-five of these interviews made it into the dissertation, including interviews with twenty-one women and seventeen men. Anthropologists Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard in the last half of the twentieth century worked with Rose Mitchell, Bill Mitchell, Elizabeth Harry, Susan Pielle, Ambrose Wilson, Tommy Paul, and Mary Clifton. Three of these interviews made it into the dissertation directly, with Rose Mitchell, Elizabeth Harry, and Ambrose Wilson, in 1973 and 1977. I took notes from eighteen PRHMA interviews (transcribed or recorded as DVD. Four of these with Sliammon residents from 2010 to 2011, Charlie

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<sup>6</sup> In Tla’amin as in many communities, membership is highly contentious. Previous research experiences in Sliammon exacerbated these arguments and undermined both relationships and research conclusions. Although I made efforts to ensure that my participants were widely recognized as “truly” Tla’amin members, however by many this approach reinforces a false construct and is unnecessarily divisive.

<sup>7</sup> OCAP® was established in 1998 during a meeting of the National Steering Committee (NSC) of the First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey, a precursor of the First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS, or RHS).

Bob, Phillip George, Elsie Paul, and Rosanna Timothy are used directly. My own interviews were taken with fifteen individuals in 2011, 2015, and 2016. Twelve of these individuals are men, and three are women, however, two of the women withdrew their interviews, and the remaining interviews informed the dissertation. At the time of interview, they ranged in age from to eighty-five to fifty-five.

The bulk of the analysis comes from this broad collection of oral histories. It has been a difficult and trying journey to attempt both a traditional historical approach as well as an Indigenized methodology. In the meantime, I have gained much from my experience speaking with Tla'amin Elders and reading their words, but the need to be alone, writing and reading, is in itself a challenge to my own Indigeneity, as I have foregone many opportunities to spend time with other Nehiyaw people participating in a ceremonial life. I hope that this dissertation does some justice to this approach, but I also hope that with patience and dedication, this work will expand and become enhanced by more Indigenous voices and translations.

### *The Problem*

As a Nehiyaw<sup>8</sup> person, my experience of housing was punctuated by time spent in tipis and sweatlodges. These examples of Indigenous architecture on the prairies are heavily loaded with cultural messages that carry within them an Indigenous worldview, and, through their design, provide lessons on how to be Nehiyaw in the world. Sweatlodges, for example, recreate the entire cosmos, with human beings sitting on the earth layer, the hot core of the earth in the middle where the heated rocks are in the centre of the lodge, and the universe above, while water sweats down a person's body and circulates through the air. Throughout the ceremony, which is meant to be difficult, any element included in the architecture of the lodge can be meditated on, including the willows that hold the lodge together, the sacred medicines used in the lodge, or one can focus on the humans safely inside the cosmology represented, the animals we share the earth with, or the power of any of the four elements. Teachings, worldview, and architecture are

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<sup>8</sup> A Nehiyaw is a Cree person.



intertwined.<sup>9</sup> This experience led me to question the major differences in worldview represented by three-bedroom bungalows, for example, and if other Indigenous people on Turtle Island also experience a disconnect between Indigenous worldview and colonial housing architecture.<sup>10</sup>

The connection between worldview and housing is abstract, and I struggled to find the right questions to ask Tla'amin Elders in order to help them explain to me the connection between their historical housing and worldview. Because I have not experienced living in a Tla'amin longhouse, and neither has anyone in *Te Shoh Sum* for at least one hundred years,<sup>11</sup> the connections were not easy to find, make, or understand. I was told, however, that the longhouse did have within it “our teaching, the knowledge of the longhouse system and what its intent was and the whole intent of that is teachings, and understanding the spirituality of it and the love that we have for one another and the respect of our ancestors and carrying out what they have left for us.”<sup>12</sup> Although the longhouse may have at one time held much of this teaching, the teachings of the Tla'amin continue in their *Ta'ow*, a personal constitution the Tla'amin people keep within themselves. Within the people is a safer space, as the rest of this dissertation shows, than the spaces erased through colonialism's processes.

Furthermore, because of the temporal distance and significant Catholic Church influence, there is continuing controversy in Sliammon about the historical operation of their Coast Salish longhouses. Longhouses are often connected to potlatch traditions and winter dances, and several respected Tla'amin people suggest that these activities did not occur in Sliammon. I cannot say for certain that Tla'amin people did not participate in potlatches, but what is clear is that between 1790 and 1890 the sizes of their longhouses declined significantly from one hundred feet long to what was eventually described as a

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<sup>9</sup> Nehiyaw teachings also include teachings related to the tipi; however, these are more well known as “tipi teachings” and can be found in Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, *Cultural Awareness Training Handbook*, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, 2011, accessed August 10, 2016, 23 <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/fckimages/file/SICC%20Cultural%20Awareness%20Training%20Handbook.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Turtle Island is a term for North America used by Indigenous people.

<sup>11</sup> People from Sliammon have experienced longhouses, but not in this particular settlement area.

<sup>12</sup> P5, interviewed with P7, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 37.

“mini-longhouse.”<sup>13</sup> If potlatches did occur, and it is likely that they did, the Tla’amin people’s ability to host them in Sliammon was curtailed by the late 1800s.



Figure 0.3. Longhouse at K’omoks, circa 1878.<sup>14</sup> The Tla’amin speak a dialect of the Komoks language and are closely associated with the K’omoks people on Vancouver Island.

Lastly, written scholarship on Indigenous connections to place rarely includes discussion of housing. Two closely related examinations of Coast Salish perceptions of space and place emerged in 2010, and neither took a close look at Coast Salish housing: Jeff Oliver’s *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley* and Susan Roy’s *These Mysterious People: Shaping History and Archaeology in a Northwest Coast Community*. Oliver defines relationships to space and examines these personal and national connections amongst the Coast Salish throughout periods of colonization. Oliver questions this conflation of identity and land, suggesting that “while it may be argued that this way of seeing has more to do with the recent politics of an emerging pan-Aboriginal protest of what some see as the destruction

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<sup>13</sup> P1, interviewed by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 5, 2011, transcript, 2.

<sup>14</sup> “Longhouse at K’omoks,” Image, K’omoks First Nation, 1878, accessed September 12, 2016, <http://www.komoks.ca>.

of their cultural heritage, it nevertheless demonstrates the high visibility of these places, suggesting how human history implicated in the landscape can be remade to serve the agendas of people in the past.”<sup>15</sup> These connections happened in a context examined among the Musqueam, another Coast Salish Nation whose territory underlies the Greater Vancouver Area. Roy describes “a colonial culture, operating at the local, national, and continental levels, which dissociated Aboriginal peoples from ancestral sites within their territories, and ... an anti-colonial (or reclamation) culture, through which Aboriginal communities (re)assert and/or revitalize this association (especially in the second half of the twentieth century when Aboriginal interpretations of the past gained increasing legitimacy in public, academic, and legal contexts).”<sup>16</sup>

Where Roy examines these outside forces, I am more concerned with what occurred amongst the Tla’amin, and how they reified their Indigenous knowledge despite these challenges. While I agree with Oliver and Roy that an overall movement is afoot to maintain and strengthen Indigenous connections to territories, this dissertation suggests that is at least partly because these are the strategically safest spaces to keep Indigenous knowledge when other modes of Indigenous expression, including architecture, have been systemically undermined. Furthermore, as mentioned above, since even this connection to the land is constantly challenged by the general movement of peoples into cities, contemporary Tla’amin people now keep that knowledge even closer, within the people themselves like a fire burning in the hearth.

### *Architectural Theorists: Western and Indigenous*

The idea of “home” takes us throughout Tla’amin peoples’ history, and this journey of a dissertation. The concept is that houses, the physical structures that contained Tla’amin families, were once Indigenous themselves, conceived of as Indigenous designs by Indigenous minds, built with Indigenous technologies, using Indigenous materials, and representing Indigenous lifeways. However, over time other architectural fashions and

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<sup>15</sup> Jeff Oliver, *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 52.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Roy, *These Mysterious People: Shaping History and Archaeology in a Northwest Coast Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 8.

interventions took place, and Indigenous houses took on a more hybrid use. Historically Tla'amin houses reflected expectations of Tla'amin behavior. As the spaces in Tla'amin houses changed, so imperceptibly did the behaviours that took place within them. In response, Tla'amin people continued to seek pathways through their land-based territories to underpin a lost approach to underlining Indigenous identity and culture. Emeritus professor of Urbanism and architect Witold Rybczynski has done much thinking and writing on the idea of “home.” Rybczynski writes, “inhabiting does not only mean living within. It means occupying – infusing a particular site with our presence; and not only with our activities and physical possessions but also with our aspirations and dreams. We live in a house, and in the process we make it alive.”<sup>17</sup> Rybczynski’s description, while demonstrating the closest meanings between humans and their homes, does not address the experience Indigenous peoples have within their territorial relationships outside of the walls of the house. Tla'amin territories became home, where Tla'amin find purpose, aspirations, and dreams, and share this with the natural world and with one another.



Figure 0.4. Sliammon in the Morning, October 2015<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Witold Rybczynski, *The Most Beautiful House in the World* (New York: Viking, 1989), 169.

<sup>18</sup> “Sliammon in the Morning,” photo, taken by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2015.

Architects and anthropologists, amongst others, theorize about the role that architecture plays in human life. There is agreement across disciplines that architecture is not simply a vessel for human life in any setting. Cultural and critical theorist Diane Morgan explains,

architecture is the most down-to-earth art form, the most fixed in space, it has an intimate relation to questions of presence, origin, rootedness and dwelling. All of these concepts have taken a battering from postmodern thought. ... in the past the architect felt it was incumbent on him, as heroic demiurge, to take upon his shoulders the burden of responsibility for building the right, improving context for society.<sup>19</sup>

Architects are clearly conscious in their decision to build a space for the future, to provide a nest for society, their community and compatriots. Anthropologists R. Barry Lewis, Charles Stout, and Cameron Wesson are more direct in their assessment of buildings:

architecture is the most visible physical manifestation of human culture. As such, it encodes much information about a society – political organization, economy, subsistence, aesthetics, cosmology and gender relations ... and the limits of this information expand as we learn more about the dynamic relationships between people and their environments.<sup>20</sup>

Other writers have been more practical, suggesting that “it is virtually impossible for architecture to achieve anything other than what a society can condone, because it involves the marshaling of significant sums of money, or the equivalent in labour and ingenuity.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, architecture is where the practical, the artistic, the cultural, and the daily intersect, reflecting upon and developing our societies’ intent.

In Western memory, the connection between humans and their dwellings extends to Aristotle. The “topos” of Aristotle was “the ‘where’ dimension in people’s relationship

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<sup>19</sup> Diane Morgan, “Postmodernism and Architecture,” in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 2nd ed., ed. Stuart Sim (New York: Routledge, 2005), 75.

<sup>20</sup> R. Barry Lewis, Charles Stout, and Cameron B. Wesson, “The Design of Mississippian Towns,” in *Mississippian Towns and Sacred Spaces: Searching for an Architectural Grammar*, ed. R. Barry Lewis and Charles Stout (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Ballantyne, *Architecture Theory: A Reader in Philosophy and Architecture* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 5.

to the physical environment, conjuring up a feeling of belonging.”<sup>22</sup> The Romans used “‘*genius loci*’ ... as the ‘spirit of a place.’ A ‘genius’ was the ‘guardian spirit’ of a physical location.”<sup>23</sup> These early Western conceptions acknowledged that meanings are shared between humans and their places, spaces, and homes. Andrew Ballantyne includes in his 2005 text, *Architecture Theory*, a review of Nelson Goodman’s *Ways of Worldmaking*, about the Villa Savoye, near Paris, designed by a French architect known commonly as Le Corbusier. In this piece, Ballantyne suggest that the Villa’s inhabitants used it to “retreat into modernity for summer weekends, and perform modernity to astound their friends, but they did not have to live their modernity all the time.”<sup>24</sup> The buildings did not “have to carry the full burden of identity-making.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the Tla’amin people, throughout the twentieth century, used their houses less and less as their primary sites of “identity-making.”

Philosopher David Kolb offers another potential way to interpret this moment between the Tla’amin and Western architecture: “Buildings embody and help form the distinctive practices and values of a community, and so they are one way of transmitting the lifeworld. But in our day the reproduction of the lifeworld has been dominated by imperatives stemming from the workings of the economic systems. Lifeworld meanings are being thinned out, and so places become thinner as well.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, according to Western theorists, there are a number of options available to explain how the Tla’amin viewed their changing housing architecture: as a modern or postmodern text, the *topos* or *genius loci*, a hybrid or plural space to reflect on modernity, or as a site of a “thinned out” lifeworld. However, Kolb and English Professor Homi K. Bhabha remind us that we will never fully know anything about people based on one analysis or even many. Kolb

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<sup>22</sup> Jonathon D. Sime, “Creating Places or Designing Spaces?” in *Giving Places Meaning: Readings in Environmental Psychology*, ed. Linda Groat (London: Academic Press Limited, 1995), 27.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ballantyne, *Architecture*, 166.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> David Kolb, *Postmodern Sophistications: Philosophy, Architecture, and Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 147.

writes, “too much discussion about place presumes a single identity for each self or community.”<sup>27</sup>

Here several spaces are examined, but they only hint at innumerable multi-faceted stories. The Indigenous house has long been theorized in anthropology. In almost every ethnographic text examining Indigenous peoples on the west coast, there is a reference to their Aboriginal housing. In 1881, anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan wrote *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines*. For Morgan, Indigenous architecture made connections between “social organization, and how ... social organization combine[s] with a system of production technology and an ecological adjustment to influence domestic and public architecture.”<sup>28</sup>

In the contemporary architectural world Indigenous architecture is seen as a window into societal operations, in contrast to Western architectural paucity. Architects Joy Monice Malnar and Design Professor Emeritus Frank Vodvarka’s 2013 publication, *New Architecture on Indigenous Lands*, suggests “it is arguable that western culture has raised estrangement itself to the status of aesthetic value.”<sup>29</sup> Malnar and Vodvarka agree with Kolb that Western architecture has created thinned lifeworlds. In their assessment: “structure, program, economics, and ego now tend to dominate western design decisions, and by extension decisions made on Native lands, in a remarkable disregard for those fated to live them out.”<sup>30</sup> These authors suggest that changes to physical spaces will most certainly result in a loss of richness of life, particularly for Indigenous people. In many ways, their argument reflects concerns similar to those of earlier salvage anthropologists such as Franz Boas and Homer Barnett.

For other scholars, however, Indigenous peoples’ use of space continues to offer insights into Indigenous lifeways. Archaeologist Peter C. Dawson described connections between Inuit and their architecture as a continual evolution in “Seeing like an Inuit

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Bohannon, introduction to *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigine*, by Lewis Henry Morgan (1881; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), x.

<sup>29</sup> Joy Monice Malnar and Frank Vodvarka, *New Architecture on Indigenous Lands* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Family: The Relation between House Form and Culture in Northern Canada.” Dawson mathematically demonstrates that Inuit continue to use their Western-styled housing in a way that reflects the collective arrangement of their life, and use their space for traditional activities. Although the space has changed, Inuit have structured their dwellings to facilitate communal events in different ways over the course of the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup>

Education scholar Jennifer Davis explores the purposeful use of space to shape the community experience and outlook in her article “The Walking Out Ceremony: A Model for Development of Character.” For the James Bay Nehiyaw, “the environment is the classroom and nature itself the teacher.”<sup>32</sup> From this simple beginning, Davis then describes how, in ceremony, multiple levels of symbols interact to represent the connection between the actors and the natural environment. In particular, the Walking Out ceremony “is celebrated in a manner akin to an initiation rite intended to reinforce the traditional roles of each person within the community. Once the child can walk beyond the confines of the dwelling, he or she is recognized as a spirit-filled person in the community, with self-determination and future productive potential.”<sup>33</sup> For this ceremony, each aspect of symbolism, including the position of the tipi and where the Elders sit inside it, is a meaningful representation of the expected operation of the universe. Underlying her argument, Davis writes that meaningful symbolic interaction engages “systemic dissemination of information” that then contributes to moral character development in individuals.<sup>34</sup> While her analysis emphasizes the environment and nature, the tipi itself has a clear role to play. It is the specific space from which the child ventures. This theme resonates with Tla’amin conceptions of space, as well as this dissertation more generally. For, as Tla’amin houses became unrecognizable from their

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<sup>31</sup> Peter C. Dawson, “Seeing like an Inuit Family: The Relation between House Form and Culture in Northern Canada,” *Etudes Inuit Studies* 30, no. 2 (2006): 113–135.

<sup>32</sup> Jennifer Davis, “The Walking Out Ceremony: A Model for Development of Character,” *Native Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (2008): 73.

<sup>33</sup> Davis, “Walking Out,” 76.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.



Indigenous forms, it was in the environment and nature that territory became “home,” the place of learning that created an Indigenous identity.

In “Indigenous Knowledge and Research: The Míkiwàhp as a Symbol for Reclaiming our Knowledge and Ways of Knowing,” Nehiyaw Social Work Associate Professor Michael Hart uses the *míkiwàhp* (tipi) as a visual symbol to connect Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe ideas and symbols. Hart first outlines the literature on Indigenous knowledge, emphasizing the role of Elders. Indigenous knowledge is holistic – topics are interconnected, including spirituality and the ecosystem – and uses reflection to achieve better self-awareness and knowledge. To illustrate, Hart describes the erection of a *míkiwàhp* – the various poles, cover, opening, and fire – and follows with a description gleaned from his Elders of what each of these can mean as metaphor. Essentially, the *míkiwàhp* can be seen as the way knowledge of individuals works together to create the strong knowledge of the collective, unknowable from the outside but intimate on the inside.<sup>35</sup>

Although the Tla’amin viewed their housing architecture as spiritually and culturally important, this dissertation argues that they used their natural connections to their territory and environment to buttress aspects of teaching and identity that were undermined through the historical shift in their housing architecture. Houses, however, remained important in Tla’amin society even as architecture changed around them. In stories recorded in Sliammon in 1969 and 1970, for example, the Tla’amin house continued to be conceived of as a site of extraordinary power, a symbol for men’s status and desirability, and for the expression of spiritual power (Chapter Two). Tla’amin, then, likely had deep connections to their place of residence, their house, but over time their houses developed a relative meaningfulness in regard to Indigenous identity, culture, and knowledge transmission.

In popular imaginations, Indigenous people and their territories are deeply connected. However, this is not a simplistic, romantic relationship built purely from the

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Hart, “Indigenous Knowledge and Research: The Míkiwàhp as a Symbol for Reclaiming our Knowledge and Ways of Knowing,” *First Peoples Child and Family Review* 3, no.1 (2007): 83–90.

outside. Indigenous people and academics have theorized this relationship from geographical, philosophical, artistic, linguistic, and literary perspectives. This is not an apolitical supposition; it has definite political undertones in the context of the continuing displacement of Indigenous peoples from their territorial lands worldwide and others' exploitation of their lands and resources. The second half of this dissertation explores the how and why of the land relationship for the Tla'amin. It focuses particularly on how their relationship to the land has shaped and in turn reflected educational practices and philosophies: for the sharing of ceremonies, culture, and Indigenous educational attainment.

Laguna Pueblo essayist and novelist Leslie Marmon Silko describes the deep feeling Indigenous peoples have for their lands as beyond human theory and completely natural: "So long as the human consciousness remains within the hills, canyons, cliffs, and the plants, clouds, and sky, the term *landscape*, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. ... the viewer [is not] somehow *outside or separate from* the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are all much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on."<sup>36</sup> Although Silko describes this relationship as inherently linked, Seneca American Indian Studies Associate Professor Mishuana Goeman refers to the danger in leaving this relationship unquestioned. Ultimately, Goeman argues, without taking them apart and examining their facets, Indigenous peoples are less armed to rebuild their relationships and resist further violence to their own cultural structures. Goeman elaborates:

Native relationships to the land [are] riddled with pitfalls and paradoxes, many of which are impossible to avoid given the nature of power and colonialism. I do not take the phrase, "relationship to the land" as a given, unchanging, and naturalized part of Native American identities, especially as capitalism and colonization have produced new ways of experiencing time and space... . On one hand, Native relationships to land are presumed and oversimplified as natural and even worse,

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<sup>36</sup> Leslie Marmon Silko, "Interior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories," in *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, ed. Simon Ortiz (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 5.

romanticized. In this, the politics of maintaining and protecting tribal lands drop out of the conversation.<sup>37</sup>

Goeman continues with other authors a series of analyses that examines oral history for the different “mental” maps that Indigenous peoples create to bolster their long histories within particular territories. Tewa Pueblo Education Associate Professor Gregory Cajete describes this mapping process: “Indigenous peoples are people of place, and the nature of place is embedded in their language. The physical, cognitive, and emotional orientation of a people is a kind of ‘map’ they carry in their heads and transfer from generation to generation. This map is multi-dimensional and reflects the spiritual as well as the mythic geography of a people.”<sup>38</sup> This process of mapping and embeddedness, although not without its political ramifications, is certainly a key component of the Tla’amin relationship to their territory. Although this dissertation does not explicitly address the stories that Tla’amin share about land, while researching their relationship with houses, Tla’amin words continued to pull me back to a more profound connection to their territories.

### *Indigenous Histories in 2016*

Anthropologists and historians have posited different ways to approach Indigenous history. Although some authors suggest that Indigenous histories have a bit part in global history, and Indigenous peoples respond to this in an effort to stand out, current historiography allows for Indigenous histories to be meaningful to Indigenous communities. For example, in 1991 cultural anthropologist Aletta Biersack, combining history and anthropology, forwarded a version of “world systems’ theory.” World systems’ theory privileges the impact of globalization and capitalism across the world on Indigenous peoples, but as Biersack documented Indigenous people actually adapt to

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<sup>37</sup> Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 28.

<sup>38</sup> Gregory Cajete, “Philosophy of Native Science” in *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*, ed. Anne Waters (Etobicoke: Wiley Blackwell, 2003), 46; re-quoted in Joy Monice Malnar and Frank Vodvarka, *New Architecture on Indigenous Lands* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 14.

these forces in their own ways.<sup>39</sup> More recently, in 2007 anthropologist Jim Clifford suggested that in response to these homogenizing movements, Indigenous “people are improvising new ways to be native.”<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in 2010 ethnohistorian Keith Carlson called for an “event centred analysis” that allows for Indigenous structures to supersede and then ebb and flow along with the vagaries of history, including colonialism.<sup>41</sup> In 2013 historian Kathryn Magee Labelle suggested that Indigenous history is properly part of “multiple systems of power and within a North American rather than Eurocentric context.”<sup>42</sup> Telling Indigenous history in Canada and internationally has become an academic pursuit that seeks balance and an acknowledgement of hundreds of thousands of years of Indigenous “pre-history.”

Despite efforts by Labelle, Carlson, and others to make academic Indigenous histories relevant to the communities that experienced them, strong pressures continue to devalue, dismiss, and silence Indigenous perspectives. In *Telling It to the Judge: Taking Native History to Court*, historian Arthur Ray references Canadian lawyer Peter Hutchins’ description of how the court system can reinforce Indigenous stasis:

One of the cruelest contemporary paradoxes in Indigenous-State relations is the courts’ insistence on Indigenous claimants’ proving the continuity of a cultural practice in order to establish an Aboriginal right under the prevailing legal tests, while modern society and governments require Indigenous peoples to swear off many of the traditional ways in order to “deserve” economic support and be eligible to conclude “modern treaties.” ... Historians ... are capable of encouraging judges and non-Indigenous society to recognize that Indigenous culture is at once fluid and tenacious – the umbilical cord linking and feeding the past, present, and future – and that present day Indigenous peoples *are* their Indigenous ancestors

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<sup>39</sup> Aletta Biersack, “Prisoners of Time: Millenarian Praxis in a Melanesian Valley,” in *Clio in Oceania: Toward a Historical Anthropology* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

<sup>40</sup> James Clifford, “Varieties of Indigenous Experience, Homelands, Sovereignities,” in *Indigenous Experiences Today*, ed. Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starns (New York: Bloombury Publishing, 2007), 197. Although Clifford noted this in 2007, he was repeating a stance taken in 1988.

<sup>41</sup> Keith Carlson, *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 28.

<sup>42</sup> Kathryn Magee Labelle, *Dispersed but not Destroyed: A History of the Seventeenth-Century Wendat People* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 5.

and have the right to remain so in the process of reconciliation and contemporary relations with the state.<sup>43</sup>

Hutchins and Ray argue that the continuity of Indigenous identities and lifeways exists, but also changes, in ways that are entirely authentic. Denying their continuity as well as the reasonable expectation of change is to undermine the persistence of Indigenous people. Ultimately, these pressures demonstrate that to tell Indigenous history on its own terms continues to be a political act.

### *Coast Salish Historiography*

Recent histories on the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia (BC) have won prizes across Canada; however, most of these narratives are situated in the camp of colonialism and as such are removed from Indigenous experience. In the 1970s, Robin Fisher wrote *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774–1890*, and shortly thereafter, Rolf Knight penned *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1858–1930*. In 1988 Celia Haig Brown published her important work *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. In 1990, Paul Tennant wrote *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia*. In 1997 and 1998, respectively, Cole Harris wrote *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change*, while Mary-Ellen Kelm wrote *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900–1950*. In 2001 Adele Perry joined the literature on ideas of bodies and space in *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871*. The overriding interest in Indigenous space continued in Cole Harris' *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. Most recently, in 2010 Keith Thor Carlson foregrounded Indigenous conceptions in the review of colonialism in *The*

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Hutchins, "Holding the Mirror up to Nature: Law, Social Science, and Professor Arthur Ray," in Arthur J. Ray, *Telling It to the Judge: Taking Native History to Court* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), xxiii–xxxv. However, In *R. v. Sparrow* the Supreme Court ruled that Section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act of 1982 "must be interpreted flexibly so as to permit their [rights'] evolution over time." *R. v. Sparrow* 1990 1 SCR 1075 at para. 4, [scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/609/index.do](http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/609/index.do).

*Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism*. Carlson writes out of a particular regional trend that centres on the Indigenous experience.

Although Fisher's work offers a useful historical overview, it is Knight's that shines through in its desire to combat ideas of romanticism in Indigenous economies, as well as in the prevailing assumptions about Indigenous economic dependency. Knight's work continues to shape and inform Indigenous scholarship to this day. The lessons for today's scholar are the need to find a critical gendered analysis, assume an outright rejection of stereotypes and assumptions (both positive and negative) and access non-traditional historical sources. Finally, Knight's work situates the Tla'amin in an early history of wage-economy participation in BC.

Tennant and Harris plant their analyses in the ground. In 2002 Harris had an opportunity to create a new work about colonialism and space in *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*. In this work Harris adds an element of back and forth between Indigenous peoples and various land administrators. He demonstrates strongly the influence that Indigenous peoples had over Indian Land Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, and allows for Indigenous voices throughout his piece. He continues, however, to make this more of a colonial story about Natives, rather than a Native experience of colonialism. Tennant's work focuses on Indigenous land politics in BC. This work certainly provides a context for the Tla'amin architectural and land relationship, but it offers little insight into the meaning of the land to Indigenous peoples, beyond territory and economy.

Historians Kelm and Perry offer an analysis of body and gender in the colonial relationship in BC that helps to situate the Indigenous body within its spaces. Kelm begins with the premise that "Aboriginal bodies [are] at the very centre of how we understand Canada's colonizing relationship with the First Nations."<sup>44</sup> Kelm uses an analysis of the "unfinished body," one that is constantly under social construction, to

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<sup>44</sup> Mary Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900–1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), xv.

explore the ways in which colonization is both “diffuse [and] dialectical.”<sup>45</sup> Perry aims to continue post-colonial discourse on geography and bodies, while adding an important gendered dimension. However, much like Harris, heavy with fascinating theory and multi-faceted examinations of colonialism, Indigenous peoples are relatively quiet as the drama of BC history unfolds on Perry’s pages. Thus, the work of examining the complicated history of colonialism in coordination with Indigenous histories and voices remains a project to be tackled, likely over the next lifetime, as the histories here discussed have spread across fifty years and represent the continuous movement forward and back of history itself. Perry and Kelm focus less on Indigenous conceptions of bodies and space themselves, and more the possibilities and ideas available to colonizers.

Amid these many stories in BC historiography including Indigenous peoples, Keith Thor Carlson’s *The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* uses ethnohistorical methods to highlight Indigenous perspectives. Carlson writes, “non-Natives are not necessarily always the most important thing in Indigenous historical consciousness, let alone Indigenous history. Ethnohistory requires historians to explore not only the story of Natives in newcomer history, but also the saga of newcomers in multiple Aboriginal histories.”<sup>46</sup> As mentioned above, this includes Indigenous history that describes various “supra-tribal” identities.<sup>47</sup> In his ethnohistorical approach, Carlson stirs oral history with historical research. What results is a postmodern treatise on *Stó:lō* history, allowing the extensive colonial histories examined above to make their relevant appearances. There is some overlap between the cultures and interpretations of the Tla’amin and *Stó:lō*, although the Tla’amin are their own nation with specific practices and beliefs.

Carlson’s work is an important regional piece amongst Coast Salish historiography. Tla’amin are Coast Salish, and not only do many of these works address the Coast Salish directly but several are directly interested in the relationships between the Coast Salish and their territory; however, none addresses Coast Salish architecture,

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<sup>45</sup> Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies*, xviii.

<sup>46</sup> Carlson, *The Power of Place*, 27–28.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

perhaps due to an assumption that this was a topic covered by archaeologists. In 1977 anthropologist Pamela T. Amoss contributed to a broader work, *Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World*, her understanding of “the power of secrecy among the Coast Salish.”<sup>48</sup> She describes how, in the 1970s at least, all Coast Salish had the potential for personal power. It is through secrecy that this potential remained hidden, and, since no one knows the true power of another, this secrecy facilitated respect for others. While this topic is not directly addressed throughout the remainder of Coast Salish works, the underlying concepts of power, secrecy, and respect can easily be seen throughout. Furthermore, her discussion of power intertwines with the following discussion on Tla’amin interactions with architecture and land. Through their relationships to these different spaces, Tla’amin may have been able to gain greater individual access to power, an important consideration that other Tla’amin ought to be wary of.

Wayne Suttles’ *Coast Salish Essays*, based in a “Boasian environment” of academic schooling, provides pertinent observations that underline important Coast Salish distinctions. Like Amoss, but briefly, Suttles addresses spirit power. Suttles is more concerned with how different aspects of Coast Salish expression, including spirit power, tie directly to status. Suttles is interested in “ecological anthropology,”<sup>49</sup> his dissection of ecology by local region is largely technical. However, despite his step-by-step analysis of Coast Salish culture, Suttles leaves much space for the exploration of Indigenous relationships to both architecture and land. In many ways, Suttles encourages this exploration and is surprised by the persistence of Indigenous identities: “today in spite of an almost complete replacement of native material goods and a century-long conflict between white and Native beliefs and practices, basic features of Native social organization remain.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Pamela T. Amoss, “The Power of Secrecy among the Coast Salish,” in the *Anthropology of Power: Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World*, ed. Raymond Fogelson and Richard N. Adams (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 131.

<sup>49</sup> Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), xii.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.



Crisca Bierwert's 1999 volume, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power*, ushered in a new era of Indigenous contributions to their own academic history and anthropology, and this added considerably to the richness of her narrative. Bierwert situates this work closer to the Indigenous intellectual: "the intent is to join Native intellectuals in the work of engaging with current critical discourse.... Far from being definitive in its scope, [my] ambition reaches toward another critical intent, that of being a non-authoritative text that nonetheless speaks knowingly."<sup>51</sup> Bierwert describes Coast Salish connections to land through a number of different examples, demonstrating that, as opposed to "place" as socially constructed and inscribed, the Coast Salish are intimately tied to their territorial sites and in a process of mutually informed physically creation.<sup>52</sup> Bierwert asserts that, because of this tightly wound relationship, amidst environmental change, "peoples occupation in the fullest sense of the term would become discontinuous with past performance, putting their ways of knowing at risk. Conversely, to the extent that resources are reordered, embodied knowledge is lost and what now mobilizes fishing people on the river is altered as well."<sup>53</sup> While this argument has its place, certainly, this dissertation seeks to describe how ways of knowing persist and are buttressed even throughout drastic transformations in Indigenous space-scapes.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Elsie Paul, in collaboration with historian Paige Raibmon and Paul's grand-daughter Harmony Johnson, has produced *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*. Raibmon's introduction to the work echoes the desires of the authors in John Lutz' edited collection, *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, to learn how to "listen," and their associated recognition that "learning does not come naturally. It requires what the

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<sup>51</sup> Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 4. John Lutz and others continued this interest in interrogating all sources equally, acknowledging "world-views" in the 2007 collection on the Coast Salish, John Lutz, ed., *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 32.

<sup>52</sup> Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar*, 280.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

literary critic Northrop Frye used to call an educated imagination.”<sup>54</sup> Paul shares story after story of her own life, many of which reflect *Ta’ow* as taught to her over the course of her life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this work are many directives for young Tla’amin people, a record of Tla’amin history, as well as layer after layer of insight into the cultural values of the Tla’amin. Paul’s stories reveal, although do not emphasize, important connections to shared and then individualized Tla’amin housing, as well as different sites used for sharing knowledge, and the disruption that residential school caused.

Paul engages with themes raised by previous scholars such as Bierwart, Roy, and Oliver, but does so through her own life experience as a Tla’amin woman. Paul asserts her land/territory connection with regard to a story that emphasizes self-care following a death in the family: “It wasn’t a legend. It wasn’t a made-up story. I *truly* believe in that. And they used to point out, “That’s the tree that the white owl came and sat on.” And what makes it more believable – makes it more factual, makes it more useful – that you could use it, because was true. Doesn’t get any better than that.”<sup>55</sup> In this description, Paul acknowledges that outsiders may question her perception that self-care may be unimportant following a death in the family. In one of her stories, a man almost died and needed the white owl to return his spirit. In this story the impression is left that the white owl returned his spirit, and the physical location where the white owl brought the soul to is visible. These physical markers make the story true, and reconnect Paul to the people who earlier lived the story, the white owl, and the site of the white owl’s appearance in the tree in Tla’amin territory. All of these aspects of the natural world, history, and human experience are deeply intertwined to ensure that Paul herself, and those who hear her tell the story, take seriously the need to follow a death with recommitment to life. This dissertation examines the meaning that Tla’amin people bring to such stories and in so doing argues that throughout the twenty-first century Tla’amin have continued to find

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<sup>54</sup> J. Edward Chamberlin, “Close Encounters of the First Kind,” in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, ed. John Lutz (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 24.

<sup>55</sup> Elsie Paul, Paige Raibmon, and Harmony Johnson, *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 304.

themselves within their territory. Their relationship to their land literally and figuratively grounds their identity, and this relationship has been sustained despite a colonial-induced divorce from their longhouses as “homes.”



Figure 0.5. John Louie Preparing for the Governance House Opening Ceremony, April 9, 2016<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “John Louie Preparing for the Governance House Opening Ceremony,” photo, Sliammon First Nation Facebook Page, *Treaty Effective Date Celebrations*, April 9, 2016, accessed August 10, 2016, [https://www.facebook.com/163389967131915/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=764522790351960](https://www.facebook.com/163389967131915/photos/?tab=album&album_id=764522790351960).

## **Chapter One**

### **“Big Houses” or “big houses”: Housing Sizes and Their Implications for Tla’amin Status and Expression in the Twentieth Century**

Tla’amin oral traditions seem to demonstrate that through history, the Tla’amin house was a site of transformative power, particularly for men. The way this power was expressed varied based on the housing forms that were used by the Tla’amin historically and adaptations introduced through either their Euro-Canadian neighbours, the Canadian state, or through Church representatives. This chapter examines the difference in Tla’amin history and society between a “Big House,” (a longhouse distinguished by both its ceremonial and cultural use as well as by its size), and a “big house,” (a house defined strictly by size), so as to illustrate important features about Tla’amin status over the past two centuries. Many Tla’amin people today aver that “Big Houses” (giant communal houses where inter-community potlatches were held) have never existed in Tla’amin, but rather that people lived in smaller longhouses where smaller-scale ceremonies took place within the context of close family affiliations. At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, traditional cedar plank communal longhouses (whatever their size and function) had been replaced with European-style bungalows that were generally of uniform sizes. Over the course of the early twentieth century the idea of historic houses as “big houses” emerged in Tla’amin. During this time, the means of achieving, and the meaning behind, high status also changed. Status became more attainable to a wider population who did not necessarily have hereditary claims. Affiliation with the Church along with wealth acquired through wage labour in the capitalist economy were the two most visible means of enhancing status in the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Tla’amin families

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<sup>1</sup> This argument focuses almost entirely on the options available to Tla’amin men. While this was not a directed investigation, information about men in Sliammon was accessed from accounts of earlier

had both greater and more equitable opportunities to enhance status, and as a result differences in housing sizes became more apparent.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Church and State authorities intervened to encourage adaptation of Euro-Canadian housing practices. Tla'amin, however, continued to adopt Western elements into their housing architecture well into the middle of the twentieth century. Tla'amin did not outwardly resist or even appear to resent the colonization of their architecture until the mid 1950s to late 1960s, when the Department of Indian Affairs began to impose a specific style of previously used and entirely pre-fabricated houses on the community.

Upon first observing Tla'amin homes in the 1790s, Europeans noted the use of wooden homes constructed of large cedar planks fastened with ropes to large permanent cedar poles. This design rendered the exterior walls and roofs of Tla'amin houses portable, and also enabled homes to be large with the posts well decorated with carvings. Tla'amin people have oral history that suggests these moveable houses were preferred as they keep fresh air circulating around the house and minimize pests. A single such house provided accommodations for several families at a time, including extended family.<sup>3</sup> By the 1880s, Tla'amin began to contend with interlopers' ideas about the shape that their housing architecture should take. Catholic missionaries who visited the Tla'amin attempted to impress upon their converts and friends that "European-style" housing was better for their physical health and symbolic of their adaptation to "civilization."<sup>4</sup>

By 1915, this advice seems largely to have been accepted. In 1918, however, the Tla'amin suffered a "Great Fire," a remarkable event that left their homes in ashes. This

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anthropologists, influencing historical information. Additionally, in public, Tla'amin men were more vocal in leadership positions.

<sup>2</sup> Depending on the time frame they increased, we saw earlier how in comparison to houses in the late nineteenth century, Tla'amin houses in the early to mid-twentieth century were relatively small.

<sup>3</sup> Agnes McGee, interview by Connie Wilson and Karen Galligos, July 21, 1998, MIS.48.49.50.52 Audiocassette 48,49, 50, and 50, trans. Connie Wilson, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC; Annie Dominic, interview by David Dominic, April 14, 2003, Tiskwat.3 Tape 3/Side A, trans. Karen Galligos, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC; Informants Rose Mitchell, Bill Mitchell, Elizabeth Harry, Susan Pielle, Ambrose Wilson, Tommy Paul, Mary Clifton, interviews 1972–1978, in Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard, *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1983), 59–60.

<sup>4</sup> Vicariate of BC Letter from Mgr. D'Herbomez to Reverend Father Martinet, August 25, 1884, annual publications of the Missions de la Congrégation d'Oblates de Mary Immaculate, St. Thomas Moore College Shannon Library, Anglin Collection.

moment served as a chrysalis to future Tla'amin homes, and after a brief period of living in large houses on Harwood Island (Ahgykson), Tla'amin houses standardized into smaller, nuclear family houses built by Tla'amin members. These Euro-Canadian-style homes continued to be built by Tla'amin into the 1950s, often with material and basic structures being provided by Indian Affairs. However, in the 1960s, the Department of Indian Affairs took over Tla'amin housing more directly, providing not only materials but also entire houses, culminating in the arrival of "Ladner houses" from the military base at Ladner, BC, bought through an agreement with the Canadian military and transported wholesale to Sliammon in 1969.

When Captain George Vancouver sailed the waters around Sliammon in 1792, his ship's naturalist, Archibald Menzies, kept a log that tells us a bit about the villages they encountered. He noticed that some houses stood apart from others in terms of their size, something he attributed to the relative status of the inhabitants. Menzies, along with midshipman, Mr. Humphries, drew and described the village: "The Summit is occupied with the crowded remains of the Village consisting of posts spurs & planks crossing each other with the utmost confusion in all directions. At the landing place which is a small Beach close to the Rock are standing the Posts & Beams of a solitary House which from its size painted ornaments & picturesque sheltered situation seemd to have been the residence of the Chief or some family of distinction."<sup>5</sup>

In 1792 it was apparent to outsiders that, within at least one deserted Tla'amin village, one house stood out from the others, "from its size" seeming to represent either special inhabitants or a particular function or both.<sup>6</sup> It is possible that at this time

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<sup>5</sup>Archibald Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage. April to October 1792. Memoir V C.F. Newcombe E.* (Victoria: William H. Cullin, 1923), 67–68.

<sup>6</sup>Gene Wheaton, "Pitstructures or Brush Huts: An Analysis of 20 Recently Discovered Residential Structures in the Jornada Mogollan Area of Southern New Mexico and West Texas," *Kiva* 79, no.3 (2014): 55–82, accessed July 5, 2015, doi:10.1179/0023194014Z.00000000014; Jack L. Nasar et al., "Infill McMansions: Style and the Psychophysics of Size," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29, no.1 (2009): 110–123, accessed July 5, 2015, doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2008.09.003; Rachel E. Dwyer, "Changing Tastes and Changing Fates in the Demand for Houses, 1960–1999," *Conference Papers American Sociological Association 2003 Annual Meeting*, 1–47, accessed July 5, 2015, doi:asa\_proceeding\_8596.pdf; Ruth Eckdich et al., "Cutting Monster Houses down to Size," *Planning* 65, no.10 (1999). A review of recent articles on house size demonstrates that the social relationship to house size is a complicated formula including available resources, social pressures, aesthetics, values, relativity to neighbours, and fashions.

Tla'amin status was more pronounced than later. Anthropologists who interviewed Tla'amin people in the period from the 1930s to 1970s may not have been able to gather information that referred to that distant time period. Why this deserted village had one large house that stood out so starkly from the rest remains a mystery.

*Coast Salish Conceptions of Status over a Century of Research (Late 1800s to Late 1900s)*

For anthropologists Homer Barnett, who conducted his fieldwork in the 1930s, and for Wayne Suttles, whose fieldwork began in the mid 1940s, Coast Salish status was subtle but did hold the potential to be expressed physically within community architecture. Barnett found that although status and reputation was dear to the Coast Salish, “class lines were not well defined”<sup>7</sup> in the 1930s and were more symbolic and rhetorical than determinist.<sup>8</sup> Suttles devoted significant time and intellectual energy to interpreting “Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish.” In his analysis, access to resources, wealth, “private knowledge,” and “moral training” offered most Coast Salish access to “upper status,” which included the “bulk of the population.”<sup>9</sup> Private knowledge and moral training are connected. Private knowledge is knowledge about the community, personal genealogy and family, ritual secrets and cultural practices shared amongst family members only, and included significant moral training. Moral training was teaching the proper way to conduct oneself. Suttles commented that although there was a fear of being considered low class, there were, in fact, few such people. Regardless, Suttles describes that if a community grew too large, and in particular if people without status became disgruntled with the village’s leaders, it could split. This

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Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955), 244. This chapter assumes that a bigger house may have meant greater status, based on the idea in Homer Barnett that a larger family, which meant more clout in the nineteenth century amongst Tla'amin, required a larger house. Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 22. This is not a straightforward thesis, Wayne Suttles reminds the reader: “a larger household means more mouths to feed at all times and conditions of production must have set limits to the size of a household.”

<sup>7</sup> Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955), 247.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 245–247.

<sup>9</sup> Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish*, 11.

could explain why the community described by naturalist Menzies had only one big house that stood out. Perhaps a split was about to take place due to an engorged “lower class” population.

Current Tla’amin discussions about how status worked in the past reflect these anthropological interpretations. An Elder replied to this anthropological interpretation, saying,

I don’t know whether you want to call them upper class, but people recognized the fact that the leadership or hereditary leadership may have been the reason they said there was an upper class and lower class sort of thing. I know another nation that is more so ... because of the wars and the captured individuals and all that, that might have started families themselves, they may have been classified as lower class because of the fact that they may have been captured in some sort of raid or defense or whatever. But, in my mind, and the way I think the community was, especially my perspective as a young boy, my great grandfather Chief Tom, he was looked at in a different way, and because of his leadership quality. Not to say that he was richer or anything than other members of the community because he was more sharing.<sup>10</sup>

For this Elder the existence of classes was a fact, although he understood it to have been fluid in his own community while the distinctions were more pronounced in other communities. Furthermore, Chief Tom’s leadership was hereditary and demonstrated his qualities as a leader. As Suttles mentions above, leaders like Chief Tom had moral training; in the Elder’s words, he was “more sharing.”

Additionally, through the intervention of the Church and Department of Indian Affairs, some decades before Chief Tom’s tenure, the broader community had undergone fissure, where the distinctions between the Homalco, Klahoose, and Tla’amin were accentuated. This separation ensured greater influence within each community by Church authorities, and also may have changed the operation of classes in Tla’amin. Instead of an emphasis on moral training in the Tla’amin sense, the Church’s Christian conceptions of morality grew in importance and prestige.<sup>11</sup> Where once status amongst Tla’amin may

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<sup>10</sup> P5, interview with P7, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 2.

<sup>11</sup> P1, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 5, 2011, transcript, 4. This split is controversial in Tla’amin memories; however, many interviewed Elders from the 1970s up until my interviews in 2015



have led to fissure within village settlements, in this era the strong influence of the Church and State resulted in institutionalized distinctions between the three formerly closely affiliated tribal communities.

#### *Tla'amin Housing in the Late 1800s*

There is disagreement among the memories of those Tla'amin people born between 1940 and 1960 as relates to their pre Church-influenced housing. One Elder suggested that

what we call the longhouse, where you do ceremonial stuff, but in actual fact, there were actually homes that were, families lived in there. And there were quite some sizes that were big structures. ...

... because they had a bigger family. And having the ability to accommodate visitors and all that.<sup>12</sup>

Another Elder stated, “we never did have potlatches here. I don’t even, actually I don’t even remember having longhouses here, for, I mean, as long as I can remember, anyways. We always had, they were just smaller homes.”<sup>13</sup> Yet another current Elder historicized the distinctions, saying “We differ from other reserves. We are a peaceful people. The longhouses are from the Fraser Valley, and the northern way. Down this way it was, but it just kind of faded when the Priest got here, the Black Robe they call him. They used to invite other reserves, the Potlatch, but all that disappeared when the Priest started coming around.”<sup>14</sup> Likewise, some Elders carry traditions of the existence of Big Houses and big houses, for ceremonies and housing larger families respectively, and others suggest that there may have been some Big Houses, but these quickly disappeared with the influence of the “Black Robe” or Catholic Church. Likely there were both, but when the “Priest started coming around” the Tla'amin desire to be “peaceful people” meant that the few larger longhouses they may have had transitioned from Big Houses to

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suggest that there were differences between how the three communities behaved leading up to the split: where some interviewees comment sadly on the split because it divided the people, others recalled acrimonious disputes that led to the separation. For example, one Elder suggested, “When the Indian Agent split Homalco and Sliammon. That’s when the trouble started.”

<sup>12</sup> P5, 2015, 1.

<sup>13</sup> P6, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 17.

<sup>14</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 2011, transcript, 1.

big houses, no longer holding ceremonies but instead housing many family members. The remaining big houses recalled the same prestige once represented by the Big House.

Tla'amin people used both permanent and mobile dwellings, often also differentiated by size. In their oral history,<sup>15</sup> Tla'amin people refer to their mobile houses as either shacks or tents.<sup>16</sup> Some tents were canvas, other tents were historically made as follows: "Look for a nice cedar. Cut them very thin. Leave it on your canoe. When you come to the beach, camp, put it up using some boards, then you stay inside. Never get wet, that is what you use for a tent."<sup>17</sup> Another recorded Tla'amin interviewee described most houses as shacks, and in this passage, shacks are seen as more permanent than tents: "they had their shacks, some were small, they didn't have any fancy shacks. Sometimes you can see outside through the knotholes and stuff like that. ... Shake houses [are] good for protection if the wind is blowing hard or snowing."<sup>18</sup> She added that moss and other greenery was used in the ceilings to keep the weather out. She explains that the cedar was cut lengthwise, and this composed the roof: "They split it like wood, long cedar, long like a board and that is what they used for their house roofs."<sup>19</sup> In the following passages, that many Tla'amin inhabited shacks while a few big houses dominated the village seems to be a recurring idea, similar to the village recorded by Menzies. All of these, and what they represented, were unsatisfactory to nineteenth-century outsiders like clergymen, who condemned them on what they considered sanitation grounds.

Indeed, several sources describe, or attempt to describe, nineteenth-century Tla'amin housing. These sources reinforce the perception that "common" Tla'amin

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<sup>15</sup> The Tla'amin have collected oral history since at least 1969. They have kept recordings as well as transcriptions of these interviews, which have been used extensively for this dissertation, in the Sliammon Treaty Office.

<sup>16</sup> Joanne Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008). The term smokehouse is also used interchangeably to refer to a longhouse used for ceremonial dancing amongst the Coast Salish. This does not appear to be the way the Tla'amin use the term.

<sup>17</sup> Noel George Harry, interview, #5 12072012\_00018 4.52.36 PM.pdf, notes, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>18</sup> Annie Dominic, interview with Dave Dominic, interview by Karen Galligos, April 14, 2003, Tiskwat.3 Tape 3/ Side A. Annie\_Dave\_Dominic.03.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

people had shacks while a few Tla'amin represented their high status through more prestigious larger housing. Barnett conducted oral history research with informants Chief Tom, Tommy Paul, Westly, and Mitchell in 1934 and 1935. Anthropologist team Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard in the last half of the twentieth century worked with Rose Mitchell, Bill Mitchell, Elizabeth Harry, Susan Pielle, Ambrose Wilson, Tommy Paul, and Mary Clifton. A local newspaper also ran an account of Tla'amin housing in 1958. The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) and its predecessors made its jurisdiction felt in Sliammon from 1873 onward, yet many of the records kept by the department are focused on the use of Tla'amin lumber reserves and related business decisions.<sup>20</sup>

The DIA did survey Tla'amin land in 1888. "The village contained 47 substantially built houses, in the centre of which stands the Roman Catholic church to which denomination these people belong,"<sup>21</sup> while Harwood Island was being used for livestock. The author of this report was most concerned with the Church in Sliammon, and spent little time elaborating on what he meant by the "substantial" Tla'amin houses he observed. Among the reports of the department's surveyors, the Church is described as having a central role in the community<sup>22</sup> and indeed, its location in the centre of the Tla'amin settlement suggests that Tla'amin people regarded it as such as well.

Although this brief 1888 description from the DIA suggests that Sliammon was similar to a Euro-Canadian community, it does not reveal what sort of differences one might have encountered if one had been able to spend time learning more about the "substantially built" Tla'amin houses erected near the Church. In 1934 and 1935, Barnett's informants had plenty of knowledge to share about their housing in the 1800s.

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<sup>20</sup> These discussions do reveal changing approaches to governance, and the resistance Tla'amin often made to the Department of Indian Affairs through various means, including letter writing, the use of a lawyer, and refusing to meet. Over the early twentieth century, the Tla'amin were able to convince the Indian Agent to act on their behalf, in the matters of timber and business, on some occasions.

<sup>21</sup> Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard. *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1983), 128.

<sup>22</sup> The Catholic Church at this time was a temporary structure, erected in 1873; a permanent Church replaced the earlier building in 1896.

In his “cultural element distribution list”<sup>23</sup> he describes the Tla’amin as having had rectangular homes with corner posts that were carved and painted. They also had gabled houses, and those of a “shed type ... for poor people,”<sup>24</sup> but not for a “summer house.”<sup>25</sup> Barnett’s list describes the construction of the Tla’amin home with a “single ridgepole ... supported by long end posts”<sup>26</sup> and a crosspiece. The beams could be “directly on post tops [or] laid in groove.”<sup>27</sup> Other features were horizontal wall planks, “vertical binders ... mat-lined walls.”<sup>28</sup> The roof could have “plates”<sup>29</sup> or a “bark roof”<sup>30</sup> in the summertime. Barnett acknowledged a clear difference in winter housing between Tla’amin, with a “shed-type” for poor people and a “gabled house” for others. Although this does not explicitly reference the size of the house, it is likely the differing terms, shed and house, indicate a larger living space for the house and smaller for the shed. Barnett was clearly seeing, from the size and appearance of Tla’amin homes, two versions of housing for two different classes of Tla’amin. A contemporary Elder recalled a building deep in their memory that sounds very much like the houses described by Barnett, although he uses the term shed: “It was a shed down by the beach and there was a big room in it, and it was a shed house. ... Because it was the big square house with gables ... with the roof slanted ... But that was Chief Tom Timothy’s. I think it was a Big House.”<sup>31</sup> The chief’s house was memorable for its “big” size, and its gables and slanted roof. The house was large to accommodate the “big” room in its centre.

A local newspaper article from 1958 describes historical Tla’amin buildings at length, agreeing that these buildings denoted different status amongst the Tla’amin. It is

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<sup>23</sup> Homer Barnett, *Culture Element Distributions IX: Gulf of Georgia Salish*, Anthropological Records, eds. A.L. Kroeber, R.H. Lowie, and R.L. Olson, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> P9, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 3, 2015, transcript, 7. This Elder clarified that by “Big House” was meant where ceremonies and also living took place.

important to note that this description is of “several large, permanent lodges,”<sup>32</sup> indicating that there were a few of these buildings, rather than many. The description closely matches Barnett’s. The article describes houses that had

cedar planked, gabled roofs. The largest was close to 100 feet long. The planks on the walls were placed horizontally between upright poles, independent of the main frame, and secured with cedar withes. These planks were often removed and transported by canoes to be used as roofing on the permanent log house frames, at food gathering grounds.

The lodges were ornate with carvings and paintings of sea lions, thunderbirds, serpents and eagles and one seal lion, at the end of a ridge pole, and an ingenious trough arrangement to let oil drip from its mouth into a fire at feasts or other celebrations. One home had carved post representing a man, his mouth open, calling his people. ...

There were also lodges with shed roofs and some made of bark. The design of your lodge, gable or shed roof, designated your social standing and a shed roof or bark lodge did not hold much prestige.<sup>33</sup>

While it is difficult to know where this information came from, most of what has been mentioned in this mid-twentieth-century newspaper article about Tla’amin housing history correlates to the oral history already presented, written history, and anthropology. For example, in 2015 an Elder explained,

When I spoke to our Elder Marie George, our Elder that passed away, we weren’t really longhouse people. Because we were seasonal people. We went away in the summer, Theodosia, Okeover. Fishing, gathering, smoking and soon as winter came. ... From what I gathered there we never really built long houses because there was never a big one. If there was one it was probably a mini small one. Our Elder, Marie George, told me about a longhouse with seal heads on the corner, like a mini longhouse.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>“Last big Indian battle took place in small bay near Lund,” *Powell River News*, 1958 Centennial Edition, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> P1, 1.



Figure 1.1. Bella Coola Longhouse, circa 1890<sup>35</sup>

In this retelling, as in the above description, although the exact size of the longhouse was in question, there did exist larger homes of greater decoration that were adorned ornately and may have held greater prestige amongst the Tla'amin and their visitors. The above descriptions recount Tla'amin housing that included some big houses to accommodate just family or visitors, substantial housing for the entire community, housing divided by

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<sup>35</sup> "Bella Coola. Longhouse on Bella Coola River," Image, BC Archives. G-00966, 197904-001, 189-.

type and design based on social standing, or more uniform houses with perhaps one that could have stood out as a “mini longhouse.” Each of these depictions suggests that a division in status could be marked in the community by housing appearance, and several suggest that size was a significant factor in this distinction.

### *Purpose of the Tla’amin House*

Through the stories shared by Tla’amin Elders, the academic work of Homer Barnett, the early observations of Vancouver and his crew, and the overview in the local newspaper it seems clear that some families had much larger houses than others. These houses were more highly decorated and imposing in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century than housing in the twentieth century. Suttles discusses the “*total socio-economic system*,” including the potlatch, that took place in a longhouse<sup>36</sup> and encouraged wealth accumulation amongst the Coast Salish. In his description, larger families and, hence, larger household groups dominated more opportunities for food gathering and goods production.<sup>37</sup> This “*total socio-economic system*” is seen more as a total cultural system by the Tla’amin people of today. For example, one Elder suggested that the longhouse system involved the teaching, knowledge, spirituality, past, and future of the Tla’amin people:

So this total transition, it involves our teaching, the knowledge of the longhouse system and what its intent was and the whole intent of that is teachings, and understanding the spirituality of it and the love that we have for one another and the respect of our ancestors and carrying out what they have left for us.<sup>38</sup>

The gradual replacement of longhouses, of either gable or shed type, beginning in the late 1800s was not a neutral change; it is considered more of a “total transition” in those teachings, spirituality, and ancestral practices. Another interpretation of the

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<sup>36</sup> Longhouse here is meant to describe the physical appearance of Tla’amin homes as based on a single-room concept, shared amongst several families and elongated, with fires down the middle. These houses were not used in the summertime when the shacks described were used by everyone.

<sup>37</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 22–23.

<sup>38</sup> P5, 2015, 37.

preponderance of large housing was offered by a Tla'amin Elder, and incorporates an aspect of colonialism little discussed, disease: "There were bigger families back then because it was still in their mind, how everyone died before.... When they all lived in a Big House, they all lived like that together." Longhouses, or Big Houses, declined significantly in use by the end of the nineteenth century. Their ceremonial purpose, if not their actual existence, is called into question by many of the Elders interviewed throughout the twentieth century, from Barnett's informants to my own interviewees in 2015. Regardless, consistent descriptions remain of Tla'amin housing that was distinguished by status, by size, and by ornamentation. Size was seen as a differentiating factor for many, reflecting family sizes that built prestige, possibly through the total economic system of the potlatch.

#### *Church Pressures on Tla'amin Housing Sizes*

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, a decline in housing size occurred as new publicly shared spaces opened up and as other opportunities for gaining status and power were introduced into the Tla'amin community. The Church was one such space and opportunity, packaged in a hierarchical way that reflected individual and community-enforced discipline, systemic approaches also valued by the Tla'amin. That did not make the transition from one system to another complete or easy, but parallels in Church methods and Tla'amin governance aided its adoption. In neighbouring Sechelt, the Oblate priests rigorously implemented the "Durieu system" (named for Bishop Durieu), beginning approximately in 1870. The Durieu system entailed a strict regime that included the appointment of Indigenous leaders to enforce Church expectations of behaviour. In Sechelt, the system involved not only a hierarchy of Church tenet enforcers, including Watchmen, soldiers, and several lower-ranked individuals, but also a physical move "to a new location where they built a village of modern-style houses and a dominating church."<sup>39</sup> Sliammon had its own version of the Durieu system that was not

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<sup>39</sup> Wilson Duff, "The Indian History of British Columbia," *Anthropology in British Columbia*, no. 5 (1964): 91. See also Edwin M. Lamert, "The Life and Death of an Indian State," *Human Organization* 13, no. 3 (1954): 23–27.



as all-encompassing as that in Sechelt; they remained in their location, and oral history singles out the Watchman as the most important person and role in this system. The Watchman role echoed the way governance had operated in Tla'amin with several men at the helm. Some Watchmen chosen by the Church were already respected headmen in the community.<sup>40</sup> One Elder explained, "Nobody knew what a Black Robe was or what Jesus was. And I can imagine back in those days it was so foreign. It musta took a lot of time to draw that across to our people. And we already had a system and made the right decisions. And the Chief had assistants, the modern day example of that would be the Chief and Council."<sup>41</sup> Although the system was foreign, it did resonate with the Tla'amin on certain structural levels. This included using the same people as leaders, and instituting a leadership system reminiscent of Tla'amin governance, where several headmen supported one another regarding Tla'amin affairs.

The new, all-encompassing Church system did put pressure on the Tla'amin to modify their housing. In 1884 the Vicariate of British Columbia wrote to the Reverend Father Martinet. In this letter, the Mgr. D'Herbomez describes his visit to Sliammon and the desire of the Tla'amin to have their own school and mission. He comments on their housing to his superior:

I visited the land reserve the government had granted them. They were pleased to see that we had their material needs in mind as well as their spiritual needs and showed me their gratitude. I visited all of their houses and encouraged them to replace their primitive huts, which are open to the elements, with European-style houses. I explained that it would be better for their health and that of their children. They all promised to heed my advice.<sup>42</sup>

Mgr. D'Herbomez seems to be emphasizing that the shacks were open to the "fresh air,"<sup>43</sup> or perhaps open to "see[ing] outside through the knotholes."<sup>44</sup> The Vicariate

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<sup>40</sup> Siemthlut, Michelle Washington, *Reflecting on Traditional Governance* (unpublished manuscript, 2004), Sliammon, BC: Sliammon Treaty Society Research Department, 25.

<sup>41</sup> P1, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Vicariate of BC Letter from Mgr. D'Herbomez to Reverend Father Martinet, August 25, 1884, Annual publications of the Missions de la Congrégation d'Oblates de Mary Immaculate, St. Thomas Moore Library, Saskatoon.

<sup>43</sup> Agnes McGee interview by Connie Wilson and Karen Galligos, July 21, 1998, MIS.48.49.50.51 Audiocassette 48, 49, 50, and 51, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 6.

directly categorized the Tla'amin houses as “primitive,”<sup>44</sup> thus indicating that the path to progress was in adopting European housing architecture. Suttles reiterates that Church authorities explicitly deterred “living in multi-family dwellings ... in favour of ... residence in houses of European style on individual allotments.”<sup>45</sup> In transforming the structures in which Tla'amin people lived, Church authorities also sought to replace the system of social authority and hierarchy the Tla'amin housing system represented. From Mgr. D'Herbomez' perspective the Tla'amin house was “primitive,” and “European-style” homes both were healthier for and better prepared Tla'amin for the future. Many Tla'amin must have adopted this narrative, as houses did begin to take on more “European-style” appearances. An Elder sharing in 2015 recognized that Church, and later government, interference in Tla'amin housing was a deliberate act of colonization: “Cause the older structures that they made of cedar were too reminiscent of the post and beam construction they had built for the longhouses. And the people who came to help build their houses were trying to get them away from thinking like that. And this is the house you're going to get now. This is the modern technology now. And to forget about the old houses.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, although it was gradual, Tla'amin today view the housing impositions of both Church and State authorities as aimed directly at undermining the worldview the longhouse reflected and sustained.

### *Housing Sizes, 1900–1915*

The community seems to have taken on a more egalitarian appearance in the first decades of the twentieth century; although several homes stood out as more imposing than the rest, these did not correlate with political power with outsiders. On the occasion of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC “Meeting with the Sliammon Band or Tribe of Indians at their Sliam-mon Indian Reserve,” February 19, 1915, Chief Tom, Willie Bob, and Captain Timothy gave the commissioners a detailed list of

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<sup>44</sup> Annie Dominic, 5.

<sup>45</sup> D'Herbomez to Reverend Father Martinet, August 25, 1884, Oblates de Mary Immaculate.

<sup>46</sup> Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays*, 222.

<sup>47</sup> P8, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 17.

their holdings. Chief Tom's house was recorded as "24 ft. long, wide 14, high 10,"<sup>48</sup> Jackson Frank's as "30 ft long, high 20, wide 18,"<sup>49</sup> and Jimmie Frank's as " 25 ft. long, high 10, wide 15,"<sup>50</sup> in addition to their canoes, fruit trees, orchards, boats, and canoes. Jimmie Frank had the most additional assets: canoes, fruit trees, orchards, boats, canoes, a kitchen, and a smoke house. Dominic Tom, Joseph Tom, and Jackson Frank had the longest and tallest houses, towering five feet above the rest, but only two to four feet longer than others. Seven homes were twenty-six or twenty-eight feet long, most of these being twelve feet high. Harry George's house was recorded as fifteen feet high, but two to eight feet shorter than most of the others.

Thus, it appears that there were two to three men in the settlement that could, from the outside, be perceived as having some status or power, from the size of their houses, but their attachment to the political sphere of Tla'amin at the time was not as its spokespeople, at least with the government of Canada. They all may have been headmen, however. Six or more men would appear to have been in headmen roles, based on these sizes, yet Chief Tom, who is remembered as being the highest status community member and the last hereditary chief, is not amongst them. If Old William and William Bobb are the same, however, Bobb did speak on behalf of Tla'amin people at the commission, alongside Captain Timothy.

Although there is some evidence that housing sizes in 1915 reflected one's position within an Indigenous socio-political governance system (because several men can be seen to have larger families or resources to have built larger houses, and therefore may be headmen supporting a chief), the distribution of larger housing sizes also reveals that other opportunities for status were available. Twenty-one people had permanent homes that Chief Tom and others reported, with three at twenty-eight feet long, and four at twenty-six feet long. During this time, Chief Tom reported to the commissioners that

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<sup>48</sup> "Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC Meeting with the Sliam-mon Band or Tribe of Indians at their Sliam-mon Indian Reserve," February 19, 1915, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, McKenna-McBride Agency Testimonies: New Westminster Agency, 294, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Resource Centre.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 295.

130 people lived in the entire reserve, with “[t]wenty-five houses on all of the reserves.”<sup>51</sup> Approximately five people lived in each house, if Chief Tom accounted for children. Furthermore, in the three decades previous to this 1915 report, this would have included the Watchmen system, which institutionalized, with the help of the Church, a policing of the community by several headmen. During the commission, Chief Tom also said to the commissioners, “[a]ll my people are Catholics,”<sup>52</sup> although the Priest was only in Sliammon three to four times a year.<sup>53</sup>

Table 1.1. Housing Sizes in Sliammon, 1915

Name	House Height (ft)	House Length (ft)	House Width (ft)
Dominic Tom	13	32	16
Jackson Frank	20	30	18
Joseph Tom	20	30	17
Old William	12	28	17
Old Charlie	12	28	16
Johnnie Louie	12	28	16
Young Felix	14	26	16
Old Felix	12	26	18
Old August	12	26	16
Mary George	12	26	16
Bob George	12	25	17
Jimmie Frank	10	25	15
Jimmie Williams	12	24	16
Old Francis	14	24	15

<sup>51</sup> “Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC Meeting with the Sliam-mon Band or Tribe of Indians at their Sliam-mon Indian Reserve,” February 19, 1915, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, McKenna-McBride Agency Testimonies: New Westminster Agency, 288, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Resource Centre.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Captain Timothy	12	24	15
Chief Tom	10	24	14
Andrew Harry	12	23	13
Charlie Adams	12	22	16
Sandy Timothy	12	22	16
Harry George	15	20	12
Frank Williams	10	20	14

Chief Tom may have been able to make this statement because the Durieu system maintained an internal Indigenous Catholic presence in Tla'amin. Thus, the house sizes that Chief Tom and others shared with the commission in 1915 could visually represent the distribution of power amongst Tla'amin men who were important politically in both old and new leadership roles. Perhaps power had a different distribution, where Indigenous governance systems offered another category of status that continued to be important alongside wage labour, Church, and State opportunities but was perhaps waning. For example, Chief Tom's was not amongst the longest of buildings, and Captain Timothy, both a Catholic Watchman and someone who was commercially successful as a steamship captain, was also further down the list.

Old Felix, whose house was seventh in size, was probably Felix Moses, a man who lived in Sliammon and in Theodosia Inlet. In later years he lived "right above near the church, little house there ... small house anyways."<sup>54</sup> Old Felix was a well-known "Indian doctor"<sup>55</sup> with "really powerful healing, and could see into the future."<sup>56</sup> Within decades, Felix' house was dwarfed by the Church and other buildings around him. Felix' transition from a large to medium house in 1915 to a "small house anyways" is an indicator of how this shift continued into the early twentieth century, showing that

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<sup>54</sup> Henry Bob, interview with Katherine Blaney, Charlie and Mona Timothy, by Kerri Timothy, May 17, 1997, MIS.21.22.doc Audiocassette MIS 21 and 23. MIS.20B.21.22.23.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 71.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 37–38. Also footnoted Elsie Paul in collaboration with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson, *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 82, 300–302.

<sup>56</sup> P1, 3.

although Felix' powers were well recalled and probably valued in the first few decades of the twentieth century, the Church came to dominate much of Tla'amin power or status as time went on.

Current Tla'amin interpretations of this particular evidence hinge more on the "industriousness" and family size of these historic individuals. For Tla'amin people industriousness correlates with status and respect historically as well as currently:

I think that part just came from the work ethic of all those men and those families. ... Gilbert Francis, he had a big house, but I think it was because of the individual himself, but he just wanted more space. I think it was just individuals that were a little more industrious now then. ... Again it depended on their primary home too. If this was their primary home, then they would do that. But if they were like my great grandfather, had a house, a house over there, but it wasn't that extravagant, same as the ones in Theodosia and Okeover. Those were like cabins, or temporary cabins for that time of the season. But if their permanent home was there, or ... in the area, or elsewhere, I think that would be one of the reasons too why they would build bigger homes for their family.<sup>57</sup>

This passage reiterates the mobility of homes, that houses that were bigger to accommodate large families, as well as the potential for status demonstrated through the home, through being "a little more industrious."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> P5, 2015, 3.

<sup>58</sup> P7, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011, transcript, 8. This quotation from an Elder in 2011 captures how Tla'amin view status and expect their ancestors to have viewed status: "So that's how strong a family was. Looking after, because that was your future generations upholding your name was an honor. . . . Right, it was not to boast, but so . . . your family was looked after. It wasn't what you received; it was what you gave, that you were rich. If you had a lot of children you were rich. If you had knowledge you were rich. It's not monetary, or how much possessions."



Figure 1.2. Looking out at Harwood Island (Ahgykson) from Sliammon<sup>59</sup>

### *The Great Fire*

Tla'amin housing was remodelled following the Great Fire of 1918. Some Tla'amin believe that their ancestors lived on Harwood Island (Ahgykson) extensively previous to the fire, and others do not – still others suggested that the habitation began after the arrival of the Priest. For example, one Elder suggested that housing arrangements were already available at Ahgykson: “And in the early 1900s ... we had a major forest fire and a lot of our people moved to Harwood. ... I guess they were already prepared because we had houses there already. You know, that didn’t afford everybody a house, people had to

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<sup>59</sup> “Harwood Island viewed from the South Georgia Strait,” photo, January 23, 2013, Sliammon Treaty Society, *Lands and Resources Gallery*, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.sliammontreaty.com/?cat=18>.

build theirs and families had different locations around Harwood.”<sup>60</sup> Either way, most of the community relocated to the island immediately following the fire, and there “the houses were really big.”<sup>61</sup> Here is one Elder’s description of the fire’s immediate consequences:

It was a bad thing, but this reserve sprung up right away again, all the major old growth got burned, all the cedar, all the Douglas fir burned down, then all the second growth sprung up around here and people just slowly came back here because the water sources were here, it was hard to get on Harwood Island. But they stayed there long enough to create some farms.<sup>62</sup>

It seems that Ahgykson (Harwood Island) offered an immediate space to recreate stability and prosperity in Tla’amin lives, and that this was concomitant with the community members’ desire to represent this prosperity with larger houses than they may have had previously. Another possibility for this interpretation is not that formerly lower-status families took the opportunity to be more ostentatious in their housing, but that higher status families, in the occurrence of tragic loss, were magnanimous in sharing their homes, which required larger buildings to accommodate more Tla’amin people within their walls.

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<sup>60</sup> P5, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 28, 2011, transcript, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Mary George, interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, August 4, 1998, MIS.52.53.54 Audiocassette MIS 52, 53, and 54. MIS.52.53.54.wpd.doc, trans. Connie Wilson, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas August interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, August 12, 1998, MIS.55.56 Audiocassette 55 and 56 MIS.55.56.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 19.





Figure 1.3. Sliammon after the Fire of 1918<sup>63</sup>



Figure 1.4. Sliammon Shoreline Showing Rebuilt Houses and Church Two Years after the Fire of 1918<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> “Sliammon aftermath showing statue still standing,” photo, Rod LeMay, *Dunstan’s Studio of Photography Fonds*, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, images/028/GL000016.jpg, May 31, 1918.

### *Tla'amin Houses in the 1920–1930s*

Shortly thereafter Tla'amin homes turned to standardized Euro-Canadian-style size and appearance, and returned to the mainland, in the community of Sliammon. The Tla'amin houses in the photos in the Dr. Basil Nicholson collection housed in the Powell River Historical Museum and Archives differ from their earlier homes described above in a number of ways. They have windows and chimneys, and seem to be smaller than those described from the earlier era. In a series of photos, homes appear small, white, with a shingled roof and white siding, likely with only one bedroom, and single story. Another home has a chimney off to the middle-right, a door in the middle, and two windows – one on either side of door – with four panes; in addition, it appears to stand on stilts.<sup>65</sup> By the first quarter of the twentieth century, Tla'amin homes likely housed fewer family members, and had taken on outer design features like white washing, fashionable at that time.

Barnett commented on the uniformity of Tla'amin housing in the 1930s, reiterating that the shift from Tla'amin housing to Western-style housing was complete by that time. He made the observation in his book *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* that “it was not until the Hudson’s Bay Company found it expedient, in 1843, to shift headquarters from Ft. Vancouver on the Columbia to Victoria that the real process of acculturation began. Even then the mainland villages north of Vancouver remained isolated.”<sup>66</sup> Barnett’s writing suggest that he had an obsession with the idea of cultural “purity” previous to “acculturation.” Barnett tied this process of acculturation directly to the homes the Tla'amin kept during his visits: “At present the old culture is practically dead. There has been very little displacement of the Indian population, and reserves for the most part comprise the traditional village locations; but the material basis, the

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<sup>64</sup> “Sliammon shore line looking north with canoes, homes, beach and church. After the fire of 1918,” photo, Rod LeMay, from *Dunstan’s Fonds*, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, images/0281/19671141.jpg, 1920–.

<sup>65</sup> Dr. Basil Nicholson diary 1921–1922, Fond 36, 1 File 1, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives.

<sup>66</sup> Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 2.

technology, and the spirit of the aboriginal economy are gone. ... Houses are built in the modern manner. The ancient handicrafts are modified or have ceased altogether to be practiced.”<sup>67</sup>



Figure 1.5. Chief Tom and Mary with Sliammon Houses in the Background, 1930–1938<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.



Figure 1.6. Young Men in front of Sliammon House, circa 1948<sup>69</sup>

Barnett, in his overall discussion of the supposed remaining culture of the Tla'amin and their neighbours, as an anthropologist, singled out the style of houses as a signifier of cultural continuity. In Barnett's paragraph on the "Status of the Old Culture," he relies solely on material markers of culture, despite using the words "spirit of the aboriginal economy."

An Elder speaking in 2015 did agree that Tla'amin homes in this time period were "moderate" and "normal," words that would echo Barnett's conclusions of acculturation. He said, "They were built like the Church. You know the wood that is still in the Church there, but in a different blueprint style. ... I guess them days they were moderate homes,

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<sup>68</sup> "Chief Tom is standing. Mary is seated. Sliammon First Nations. Chief Tom was the last hereditary Sliammon First Nations chief under the Indian Act of 1929," photo, Maud Lane, *Dunstan's Studio of Photography Fonds – Maud Lane sous-fonds*, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, images/006/ph002891.jpg, 1930–1938.

<sup>69</sup> "(left to right) Henry Bob, Willy Bob, Johnny George (?) and little boy ()," photo, Sliammon Treaty Society, *Historical Image Archive Gallery*, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.sliammontreaty.com/?cat=18>.

back, way back then. ... These were, like two by four, like a normal home. Like now the way they build then, but they weren't insulated. That's the only real downfall they had.”<sup>70</sup>

In addition to these homes, also called fir “matchboxes”<sup>71</sup> by some because they were so small, there were also cedar shacks still in use. An Elder recalled staying in his grandfather's cedar shack in the 1940s: “I lived in my grandfather's one. ... Three places he had. One in, well I lived with my grandmother in Theodosia. And that's one whole room, one piece, and the beds were all along the edge. And the fire was in the middle. There was no floors then, there was just ground. All the houses had ground there. ... they keep it clean all the time.”<sup>72</sup> Within their territory Tla'amin continued to use cedar shacks, with open concepts akin to a longhouse. The community of Sliammon itself, however, was more uniformly Euro-Canadian, with square houses that had one bedroom, at most. This likely occurred as a result of pressure from their Euro-Canadian neighbours, including the influence of Sliammon's own Church leaders, as well as their own preferences for this type of housing. Tla'amin had several avenues of power available to them, including their own Indigenous “spirit powers” as well as positions and reputation gained through adherence to the Church, that could now find expression in new styles of housing. In the 1920s and 1930s, this broader access to status and power meant housing sizes were more uniform in Sliammon.

### *Spiritual Power in the House*

Although the façade may have changed, aspects of the Tla'amin house retained power in the form of the cedar that many were made of, although fir was also used. Dr. Elsie Paul describes this relationship and references its fundamental role in the family house:

“Cause that's a living thing to our people. The cedar tree is a living thing. And its gonna house you. ... It's going to give you material for building a house, the branches itself – so every part of the cedar was used for different things, such as making a rope or mats and

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<sup>70</sup> P6, 6.

<sup>71</sup> P5, 2015, 3.

<sup>72</sup> P15, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011, transcript, 18. See photo of John Louie in cedar hat, carrying cedar boughs for ceremonial purposes, April 9, 2016, on page 26.

cedar hats and just everything!”<sup>73</sup> Not only did the cedar live among and contribute to Tla’amin life but it was also a family member, embodying family relationships. Paul describes how the roots represented family members: “this is the long root. And this is the dad, and this is the mom, and this is the children. ... this family’s come to us.”<sup>74</sup> While the outer appearance of the house demonstrated preferences for Euro-Canadian elements, the house itself was composed of one of the most important spiritual plants in the Tla’amin world.

Simultaneously, these new structures did not come without potential consequences for Tla’amin. Bierwert ties early-twentieth-century Coast Salish house sizes directly to the ability to practice “longhouse religion.”<sup>75</sup> The houses that were available, “the crowded space of small houses both kept the intensity of the practice alive during the period when the practice was covert and adherents were few.”<sup>76</sup> As sizes of Tla’amin homes leveled out across the community, the possibilities available within those homes were also affected, including ceremonies.

#### *Tla’amin Houses in the 1920s to 1950s*

This increasingly Westernized approach to home architecture, including a standardized size, with the physical Tla’amin element of the power of the cedar, continued to gain momentum into the twentieth century. Some of this coincided with the economic choices Tla’amin were making, and much of it tied back to the catalyzing Great Fire. In the twentieth century, when many Tla’amin men worked in the lumber industry, a particular style of house was very popular in Tla’amin. These are described as being widespread and uniform in design: “the same kind of houses, after Sliammon burned, they were all the same type, right down the other end, and the second row was like that too.”<sup>77</sup> These

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<sup>73</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 152.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>75</sup> Crisca Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 168.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>77</sup> Johnny George, Katherine Blaney, Johnny and Mary George, Agnes McGee, Elsie Paul, Tom and Rose Peddy, Charlie and Mona Timothy, interviewed by Karen Galligos, Connie Wilson, Kerri Timothy, and Evan Adams, May 8, 1996, MIS.14.15 Audiocassette MIS 14 and 15. MIS.14.15.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 5.

were shake houses, and the generations of men who worked in logging built them: “I heard they build it themselves when they started working in a logging camp, my dad and my uncle, and I guess lumber wasn’t all that, you know and they built, well their boss helped them, built houses there. Like my dad, my uncle, my grandfather, just my great grandfather and my great granny was all the shakes. I think they split them.”<sup>78</sup> These also had smokehouses for preserving meat. Smokehouses were not a consistent feature, however, from approximately the late 1900s to the 1940s and 1950s, and sometimes one person had a large smokehouse that might service more than one family. As wage employment spread amongst the Tla’amin, houses continued to be built in standardized appearances, representing the third way that Tla’amin could gain status. Through wage labour, Tla’amin that were not necessarily leaders politically, religiously, spiritually, or through adherence to other Tla’amin traditions of reputation, could gain the same or an even higher level of outward achievement in their housing.

Paul’s experience as a young bride in the early 1950s illustrates how common these new houses were, and also demonstrates the interventions that the Department of Indian Affairs made at the time:

So right away, after we were married, we built a house. ... the department supplied us with two thousand dollars to build a house. And you had to build it yourself, so that was just for the lumber. ... It was just a shell of a house. ... And painted the floor, the kitchen area. ... It looked pretty good! So that was the only room and our bedroom. ... So gradually did more things and started fixing the other rooms. ... Then we had that little addition that we put our bathroom in the back of our house.<sup>79</sup>

Although Indian Affairs provided funds for Tla’amin homes in the 1950s, Tla’amin people were responsible for creating their own comfort with that money and the support of their neighbours. In this instance, the kitchen served double duty as bedroom, and over time Paul’s family was able to add plumbing and further walls in their house.

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<sup>78</sup> Agnes McGee, Katherine Blaney, Johnny and Mary George, Elsie Paul, Tom and Rose Peddy, Charlie and Mona Timothy, interviewed by Karen Galligos, Connie Wilson, Kerri Timothy, and Evan Adams, May 8, 1996, MIS 14.15, Audiocassette MIS 14 and 15, MIS 14.15.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 12.

<sup>79</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 229–231.

Although Paul describes a story where the stove was so hot it almost burned the house down, or the difficulties she had with frozen pipes, her house was made through pride, labour and dedication.<sup>80</sup> She does refer to the house humbly, with the “little addition” they added for their bathroom, but seems to take the most pride in their own dedication to building and decorating the house. Over time, it would appear that Tla’amin housing, as it moved to more Western appearances, similarly shifted from certain “substantial” or even “big” houses to houses with an even appearance and some additions, but with little outer embellishment.

Many other Tla’amin have similar stories about DIA housing of the 1950s. The “shell of a house” offered by Indian Affairs was too simple to provide for shelter and differentiation, and many sought both. Almost everyone I interviewed discussed additions:

Years when they came back the homes that they built here were two room houses and they put additions on their houses, most people had additions – houses were built good. Stucco inside. Can always remember that part, wood stove heat. ...  
... Some had two separate buildings, kitchen, sleeping quarters with a porch linking the two. Two separate buildings, some had it that way and others were open concept. Kitchen was always by the door and always had a high ceiling because that’s where they stored their dry food.<sup>81</sup>

The shell was made of interlocking cedar, the construction method sometimes called panbold or panerball, and these are considered today to be solid builds. Another Elder described these additions as varying in size across the community:

And that little house that was built in the 50s and it came as a puzzle. They put it all together, and it was a three bedroom house, that’s all. And we took one wall off to make the doorway off the back because of fire safety. ... Me and Steve

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<sup>80</sup> Pamela T. Amoss, “The Power of Secrecy among the Coast Salish,” in *The Anthropology of Power: Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World*, ed. Raymond D. Fogelson and Richard N. Adams (Lincoln: Academic Press, 1977). Pamela Amoss describes the multiple ways that spirit power could be expressed. It could be suggested that the raising of the house through their own efforts was one way that Tla’amin people expressed their own spirit powers.

<sup>81</sup> P3, 5.



Galligos renovated that house, and we came across three different roofs in there. Like add on, add on, add ons to the house as the family got bigger.<sup>82</sup>

Through these additions, and the care and personalization that each family put into their additions, Tla'amin maintained control and pride in their housing, although they are remembered by everyone as cold and, in that way, inadequate.



Figure 1.7. Two Boys in front of Tla'amin House, circa 1948<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> P8, 2.

<sup>83</sup> "David George and Phil George," photo, Sliammon Treaty Society, *Historical Image Archive Gallery*, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.sliammontreaty.com/?cat=18>.

*Tla'amin Houses, 1960–1970*

By the 1960s Indian Affairs took over the administration, and therefore selection and design of housing, which was unsatisfactory to many:

The Department of Indian Affairs would just send pre-fabricated ones, plop it on the ground and build it yourself sort of thing. We still have some homes. There is one home right in the corner of this road right here by the fire hall, it's a typical type of home that we received. I don't know what size that would be but, for the sizes of our family it was, that caused a lot of havoc in terms of you know your living accommodation, being squeezed in little homes that were sent out by the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>84</sup>

Through its “pre-fabricated” homes, with set inner and outer designs, the DIA erased the power the cedar had held in the previous Tla'amin homes. The structure of the house and its size corresponded to DIA norms and reflected nothing of Tla'amin culture on its own. Tla'amin sought ways to reflect their own needs through additions to the DIA houses.

Tla'amin continued to modify DIA housing to better reflect their own intents and needs. These efforts demonstrated again the inadequacy of DIA housing. An Elder described the considerable time they put into rectifying their Indian Affairs house:

My late father-in-law contributed his time, helped us to get the house built. There was a lot of handwork, hard, hard work. We had to put in our waterline. You have to jig and get the pipes in even though the roof was up and that, we had a chicken ramp. We didn't have enough money to build stairs. We didn't have enough money to have an inside bathroom... The stove was heated through oil, it was connected to the hot water tank, so we had hot water coming. So, how many years later, we finally got our bathroom hooked up. The basement was unfinished, it was dirt floor. So, we had 1, 2, 3 large bedrooms and one downstairs for the boys.

...

... It was semi-pre-fab. So, most of that was put together between my late husband, his Dad, my father-in-law, and an uncle helped to dig ditches for us to get the water. We had our own sewer septic box. ... My two boys at the time, they were like three and four, I believe, I would put them in a wheelbarrow. ... Come across and spend all day with them trying to figure out a pattern for these floor tiles. The painting, I remember we had this wood stove, the pipe was just stuck

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<sup>84</sup> P5, 2011, 3.

out the window just so we could warm up the place. My two boys, they were there, you know, just running and playing, outside playing.<sup>85</sup>

In approximately 1960 Tla'amin continued to build most of their housing from the ground up, based upon a pre-determined Indian Affairs outline and materials. Despite these restrictions, many families endeavoured to build a bigger house, with modern amenities and personal elements that reflected their own interests, for example, the tiles and painting.

DIA houses were unsatisfactory to nearly all Tla'amin, and Tla'amin members linked the inadequate size of the DIA home directly to the social challenges people experienced in their family systems. The ultimate representation of this control and interference came in 1969 when the first Ladner homes were brought to Sliammon by a deal between the DIA, the Department of National Defense, and Tla'amin leadership at the time. By the late 1960s, Tla'amin housing was far distanced from its original intent as a space for extended families to share specific points of culture. The control Tla'amin people had expressed over their housing, representing changing status amongst the community, was replaced almost wholesale. This lack of power and personal representation was highly problematic for Tla'amin, and even if the Ladner houses were a good economic deal at the time, they did not reflect Tla'amin values, and their poor quality failed to live up to expectations. At a minimum, Tla'amin members objected to how they were oriented and positioned: "A lot of the duplexes, they are facing backwards. In Ladner roads came behind the house and driveway beside. Homes are facing the bush, we had a committee, housing committee. Wanted a side door and a back door. When they came to Sliammon, the back door got put on the front. A lot of the duplexes are like that."<sup>86</sup> Being physically placed incorrectly was just the beginning. The Ladner homes cost the Tla'amin more than they had bargained for.

So, once the homes got there ... soon started to realize that the furnaces were old, deplorable. The wiring was poor. There was no insulation in the houses except for the cardboard paper painted with silver paint, that's all they had for insulation in

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<sup>85</sup> P10, interviewed by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 10.

<sup>86</sup> P13, interviewed by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 26, 2011, transcript, 2.

the walls. So we ended up borrowing \$300,000 more, to rectify, to make that house a lot better. We rewired the electrical, new appliances, new furnaces in some cases ... the whole bill came to \$648,000.<sup>87</sup>

The Ladner homes were inadequate spatially for the needs of the Tla'amin, did not meet Canadian societal standards or expectations at the time, and were expensive. But no alternatives were presented to the Tla'amin and, as a result, the DIA control over housing administration led the Tla'amin onto a path they accepted but did not ever wholly endorse. Ultimately, the Tla'amin people took the housing in stride and instituted a rental system to help cover costs for the Ladner homes.

When the first non-Indigenous recorders espied Tla'amin territory, important aspects of Tla'amin status were displayed through housing that towered over others. Throughout the nineteenth century, several houses continued to reflect the architectural principles that signaled their owners' high status. As the nineteenth century moved into the twentieth century, Tla'amin involvement with Roman Catholic Church authorities caused certain aspects of ancestral architectural expression to be curtailed while new ones opened up. New means of achieving and demonstrating status were embraced by some, but this process also saw increased pressure on Tla'amin people to conform to Euro-Canadian housing ideals. By the beginning of the twentieth century, colonial interventions into Tla'amin lifeways resulted in more families living in smaller houses that were roughly the same size and had few distinctive architectural elements. By the middle of the twentieth century, many Tla'amin participated in wage labour, particularly in the logging industry. This new economic participation offered additional methods of gaining and then conveying status through housing choices. As multiple avenues for gaining status appeared across Sliammon, houses were made in Western styles, but there was less differentiation between housing sizes, and housing took on a standardized appearance throughout the community. Tla'amin people maintained an interest in differentiating and enlarging their houses as social and financial resources permitted. The DIA increasingly asserted control over these housing choices beginning in the 1920s. By

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<sup>87</sup> P5, 2011, 4.

the 1970s such control was almost complete. As individual and family volition in housing choice disappeared, housing became a contentious issue for the community.

Throughout this time period, Tla'amin houses went through a gradual shift in their outward appearance and size. From towering longhouses or Big Houses of the 1790s, through to the somewhat smaller structures of the 1800s and early 1900s, to matchbox houses provided by the DIA or built by loggers in the 1920s to 1950s, to, finally, completed ex-military duplexes barged from Ladner, BC, this time period saw increasingly less control over housing choices by the Tla'amin, and less differentiation between houses. Although throughout the mid-point of the twentieth century Tla'amin families did expand and personalize their DIA housing, the lack of a physically imposing dominant house could represent the new avenues towards achieving and projecting status available in Indian Act and Indigenous governance, and in Indigenous and Catholic spirituality. The twentieth century brought both a complete move away from Big Houses, if they ever did exist in Sliammon, and a move towards big houses, as opportunities for expressing status and representative of large families living under one roof. As colonial control of Tla'amin housing became complete in the mid-twentieth century, the DIA extinguished both of these options.

## Chapter Two

### If These Walls Could Talk:

#### What Tla'amin Stories Reveal about Tla'amin Housing, 1969–2015

There's the Mink now and the Wolf. When Mink was a man, he went to his little boat, he went down to the beach, he was going out to spear sea urchin, and he was going along spearing sea urchin and somebody yelled out to him. Somebody said, "Mink, come and pick me up!" Mink wouldn't bother, he pretended not to hear, he started singing:

**Klem klem you see, iyXwa7an kwakwish, nah nih Xa7mu,**

Wetting my face, pretending to be spearing sea urchin

**klem klem you see, Xwa7an kwakwish'nah'nih'Xa7mu,**

Wetting my face, pretending to be spearing sea urchin.

Wolf said, "Mink! Come and pick me up!" but Mink paid no attention, he pretended not to hear, he carried on singing:

**Klem Klem you see, Xwa7a7kwakwish'nah'nih Xa7mu,**

Wetting my face, pretending to be spearing sea urchin.

The Wolf called again, "Mink, come and pick me up before I shoot you," he said.

"Hey," Mink said, "Hey, I heard you from deep down under water."

He went and picked him up, he got on the boat and he told him to open up the sea urchins, the Wolf started eating sea urchin.

"Pick the red ones."

The Wolf ate, picking all the red ones, the Wolf finished and he got sleepy, you always get sleepy after you've eaten sea urchin.

Mink told him, "You can lay down in the dug out for a while if you want to sleep, put your head on the crosspiece."

The Wolf listened and he put his head on the crosspiece and he went to sleep. He was sleeping really good and Mink was rocking the boat back and forth.

The Wolf asked him, "What are you doing Mink?"

"Well, I am spearing sea urchin."

It wasn't long and the Wolf went back to sleep. Mink cut his head off and he went home. He burned the fur off on the open fire, his house had a big opening up on top, so there he was facing down.

A couple of girls that were selling things, whatever they were selling. Mink told them, "Lift your heads up!"

And they looked up to see what's up there. The girls that were selling things started to cry, they were crying for what was peeking out from up above, it was just a head that had been cut off.

Mink got mad and said, "Why come over here to cry for the strong man?"

The girls went out. They were trying to find a way to get back at him, how to kill him. One night they called him, all the Wolves went inside and called him.

He said, "Wait, wait," he said, "Tell them I am still getting dressed!" He was putting on his good clothes.

It wasn't long and they came up to him and said, "You better hurry up Mink!"

He said again, "Tell them I am still putting on my overcoat."

It had been a quite a while then he went, he went inside and told the little necks to be close by and ready by the side of the fire. He told the knot hole in the wall to grow bigger when he runs away, he told the octopus to lay across the doorway, he told the mice to chew through all the boats down the beach, put holes in them, paddles, all of them.

Mink got inside and all the Wolves started growling, Mink started dancing, he was dancing, the Wolves jumped on him. And it was like he said, the little necks, they jumped into the fire, the fire started hissing. It was so dark inside and he ran towards knot hole, he told the knot on the wall to get bigger and that is where Mink went out, the knot hole made itself bigger. His overcoat got caught in the knothole and the Wolves started poking him with the poker. Mink got through and he ran to his boat and went out and starts rowing, he was running away.

The Wolves were chasing him, they ran out and all piled up at the doorway, slipping all over the octopus at the door, they were slipping all over the octopus, they got through and went down to their boats and put them in the water, they got it out in the water but it was full of holes, he got one that was a little better but as soon as they used their paddles, they broke right away, the mice had chewed through them. It was a long time and they went after him.

They got close to him and he went into the water, Mink. He went in this rock deep down there, his grandmother was there, down the bottom, sea cucumber. He took the sea cucumber's intestines and put it on the Wolf's spear.

The Wolf said, "Oh, it's dead!" and they left.

As soon as he goes a little ways and the Mink surfaced above the water again and said to the Wolf, "hey, QayX, what are you guys doing in the grey boat? Here I am and still alive!" Something like that.

They went back again and tried to spear him again. They couldn't kill Mink.

Ambrose Wilson (1979)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ambrose Wilson, interview by Paul Kroeber, August 19, 1979, trans. Connie Wilson, OTH.23.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 1–2. This story was shared with a researcher, recorded, and transcribed. I have amended only the punctuation and spelling. This version was selected because the Tla'amin Elder, who shared it, was respected in the community, it covers the main

Ambrose Wilson's rendering of the Tla'amin "Mink and Wolf" legend is illustrative of the animals' relationships and also reveals much about the social place and function of historical Tla'amin longhouses. Mink used his personal territory within his house to display Wolf's severed head, and then used his knowledge of, and relationship with, the plants and animals to save his own life when the Wolf family came to seek revenge. In turn, the Wolf family invited Mink to a dance at their longhouse in order to murder him. The Tla'amin houses in this story are shown to be important sites of personal territory, power, and control. While other scholars have reflected upon Indigenous sites, particularly environmental territories, as interactive spaces where Indigenous peoples both inscribe meaning into, and imbibe meaning from, spaces, this has not been examined as thoroughly in regards to Indigenous housing. This Mink and Wolf legend highlights the meaning that historical Tla'amin longhouses held as places of power, control, territory, ceremony, kinship, and spirituality. That this story was told at a time in Tla'amin history when the DIA and other outside forces were able to take complete control over Tla'amin housing suggests that the community maintained ideas about the operation of historical housing, and how the community and families operated under historical Indigenous systems, including their housing.

*Big Houses or big houses: Early Ceremonial Use of Tla'amin Houses*

Sliammon is a Coast Salish community on the Sunshine Coast mainland, north of Vancouver. The Tla'amin people's oral traditions explain that they have always lived in the area, and archaeological evidence suggests uninterrupted occupation for at least four thousand years. The settlement at the site known as *Te Shoh Sum* became a permanent year-round occupied site at about the same time that Euro-Canadians began to settle the nearby area that became the town of Powell River. This settlement was not a calm and orderly affair, instead involving dispossession, governmental missteps, and rigorous

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elements of the story, as well as the song aspect of some Tla'amin legends that does not come through in many transcribed interviews.



attempts by the Tla'amin to retain control over their territory. The area was surveyed and reserve demarcated, including Harwood Island (Ahgykson), in 1879.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 2.1. Johnny George and Leslie Adams in front of Tla'amin House, circa 1945<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Indian Affairs, Indian Reserve Commission, Minutes of Decision, 11876-1980 GR-2982, Box 2, File 1.1 Microfilm 16974, BC Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing, Number 775/80. Minutes of Decision 02 Aug. 1880. Royal BC Museum, BC Archives.

<sup>3</sup> "Johnny George and Leslie Adams," photo, from Sliammon Treaty Society, *Historical Image Archive Gallery*, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.sliammontreaty.com/?cat=18>.

The Tla'amin people share their language with three other First Nations communities, Klahoose and Homalco (on the mainland) and K'omoks (on Vancouver Island), and all four of whom were, at one time, regarded in certain context to be part of the same people. The connections were especially strong among the three mainland communities. Today the Tla'amin see themselves as largely distinct from their Coast Salish neighbours, including the Klahoose and Homalco, but at the same time recognize that there are historical and cultural ties that make them collectively "one people."<sup>4</sup>

Part of the current discourse emphasizing this difference is connected to the asserted existence, or absence, of ritual longhouse potlatch and winter dance ceremonies. Historically, Tla'amin people certainly used longhouses during the winter at their main sites, while in the summer they relocated to resource gathering sites and lived in "cedar shacks." Some prominent contemporary Tla'amin people deny the historicity of potlatch and winter dance ceremonies within their ancestor's longhouses. Instead, these Tla'amin people acknowledge the existence of "big houses" that may have housed many families but assert that these homes did not operate as "Big Houses" where elites hosted giant inter-community gatherings for potlatch and winter dance ceremonies.

The way Big House practices are discussed within the Tla'amin community reveals and accentuates certain schisms. Some interpret the absence of memory of Big House ceremonies in the community as evidence that such activities never occurred. For others, the lack of oral traditions about Big House ceremonies suggests that the influences of Church and State worked to repress or erase memories of such activities. This second stream of discourse asserts that what is recorded about Coast Salish ceremonial life elsewhere means that potlatches and winter dances must have occurred among the Tla'amin as well. One Elder, for example, recounted how he had been told that the Church used bonfires to dramatically change Tla'amin cultural practices:

The effects of the Roman Catholic in our area had a great influence in our community. And the effect of that ... was that all of our longhouses were burnt, all of our regalia, all of our totem poles. They had four big bonfires down here I

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<sup>4</sup> Personal conversations, P8, August 9, 2016 and another discussant, August 11, 2016.

guess that time. They collected all of the regalia and totem poles and anything that had to do with any cultural aspect were all burnt. And you know, the effect of the Roman Catholic Church has been very strong in our community.<sup>5</sup>

In 2011 another Elder said, “They used to invite other reserves, you know, the potlatch, but all that disappeared when the Priest started coming around.”<sup>6</sup> However, four years later, the same Elder suggested instead what occurred was a *nohom*,<sup>7</sup> “Not a potlatch, just a get together. Trade stories, how your relatives are doing that are over there.”<sup>8</sup> There is a big difference between a potlatch and a *nohom*. A potlatch is a big affair where multiple families are invited from far and wide to participate in community rituals and spiritual activities, whereas a *nohom* is a small, close-kin family feast.

This ambivalence is a theme amongst contemporary Tla’amin Elders. Another described the lack of the Big House as an important differentiation from their neighbours:

my idea was that those house were communal houses. They had sons and daughters, all of the family together. And then they started making, well not our tribe, well the Big House could’ve been our tribe. But, then they got the longhouse situations, where they had dances and ceremonies, puberty ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, birth ceremonies. They had it in the longhouse. ...  
... Well, they call it the Big House too in these places like Campbell River, Alert Bay. That’s sometimes called, I think, the longhouse from back East, I’m not sure. And here, I think it’s a big house.<sup>9</sup>

This belief in cultural experiences and history different from those of their close Coast Salish neighbours calls into question the kinds of stories that were shared amongst Tla’amin members in their collection of oral history in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Longhouses, in these stories, are associated with events that Tla’amin today do not necessarily recognize as part of their own belief system or historical practices. In saying so, contemporary Tla’amin further distance themselves from other Coast Salish communities.

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<sup>5</sup> P5, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 28, 2011, transcript, 12.

<sup>6</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 2011, transcript, 1.

<sup>7</sup> A smaller family feast.

<sup>8</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, September 30, 2015, transcript, 3.

<sup>9</sup> P9, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 3, 2015, transcript, 2 and 23.

### *Investigating Houses through Storytelling*

Stories from Tla'amin people might help explain why this ambivalence about the purpose of Tla'amin longhouses exists. There are ghost stories, legends, and also stories that involve either actual Tla'amin people or animals that live in their territory, the experiences they had, and what should be learnt from them. One Elder shared, “we used to listen to stories. ... Mink and that, and ghost stories. I'd have to run past the graveyard on my way home. I still remember running past that graveyard scared to death!”<sup>10</sup> Stories about animals were “more for the teachings of life, animals, how they lived. Some of them were comedy.”<sup>11</sup> Other stories about people included knowledge about extended family members and kin connections. One Elder described his experience: “growing older, I was told different stories. Then when I got older, they started to teach me different things – where our relatives are, who they are.”<sup>12</sup> Legends focused on Mink and his adventures, and engaged children's imaginations, often through humour. One Elder described them as follows: “Mink ... his purpose in Mink's story was to develop character for any child. There, there was in the end ... always a lesson to be learnt. ... It was always done in a funny way too so that it captured the mind of a child.”<sup>13</sup> Most of these stories were meant to be entertaining and educational. In addition to these goals, stories also offer a glimpse into how the house might have operated at different times, in the experience of Tla'amin sharing their worldviews with younger members, and members to come through recorded oral history. This section examines one legend, told above (1979), with a focus on the section that deals with Mink's and Wolf's houses, as told by another Tla'amin Elder ten years earlier (1969). The second story selection was made because it provides more detail on the housing where these events took place.

### *Storytelling as an Academic Exercise*

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<sup>10</sup> P4, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 1, 2015, transcript, 2.

<sup>11</sup> P3, 2015, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> P5, interview with P7, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 18.

The creation and sharing of oral history as an academic exercise is not new for Indigenous people, but has helped expand Western scholars' insights in nearly every field of research and Indigenous intellectual thought. Salvage anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942) and his disciples, including anthropologist Homer G. Barnett (1906–1985), compared and contrasted stories between communities to identify cultural synthesis between one group of people and another. This approach continues to resonate amongst anthropologists and historians.<sup>14</sup> More recently, in the last twenty-five years, scholars have used stories to reflect upon how they represent “place-worlds,”<sup>15</sup> or worldviews. Several of these analyses suggest that Indigenous stories are inherently about place, while others examine how stories educate and build identity, often using place-based methods. This legend about Mink and Wolf includes all of these elements, providing for past and future Tla'amin youth perspectives on social norms about who is in control in another's house and, also, how to work with different aspects of their natural environment.

Anthropologist Keith Basso's enduring and popular work amongst the Western Apache of Cibecue also examines Indigenous stories and spaces. The Apaches' storytelling traditions connect them deeply to their territories through place names and stories directly attached to particular locales. These stories are not simply survey markers on a territorialized landscape but a way of sharing with one another historical knowledge and important values. The landscapes and places of the Apache are inscribed with metaphors that show people how to live:

American Indians, like groups of people everywhere, maintain a complex array of symbolic relationships with their physical surroundings and that these relationships, which may have little to do with the business of making a living, play a fundamental role in shaping other forms of social activity. What has been ignored, in other words, are the cultural instruments with which American Indians

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<sup>14</sup> Wendy Wickwire, “Stories from the Margins: Towards a More Inclusive British Columbia Historiography,” in *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, ed. John Sutton Lutz (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007). Wickwire demonstrates how Boas' approach has often solidified incorrect impressions of the Native–newcomer narrative. In addition, Wayne Suttles, a central twentieth-century Northwest Coast anthropologist, describes himself as of the Boasian school. Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), xii.

<sup>15</sup> Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1996), 7.

fashion understandings of their environments, the ideational resources with which they constitute their surroundings and invest them with value and significance.<sup>16</sup>

These “ideational resources” interplay with the systems they are inscribed with – while Apache and others are influenced deeply by the environments that surround them, in turn, their “place-worlds” are created by them and then written onto their surroundings.

Ethnohistorian Keith Carlson describes how the *Stó:lō* people consider literacy as similar to their Transformer stories, the Transformers’ “marking” the landscape is analogous in *Stó:lō* language to writing. Thus Indigenous stories and places known by Indigenous peoples explicitly create meaning and “place-worlds.” Tla’amin houses are also a part of the environment and place-world that Tla’amin people shared information about in their stories.

Although they may be inscribed on places and spaces, stories also roam and enable change. Author Thomas King, in *The Truth about Stories*, discusses how stories are capable of inspiring physical action. His refrain for each chapter is “but don’t say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You’ve heard it now.”<sup>17</sup> King, like Basso and Carlson, connects stories, spaces, spirituality, physical reality, and the actions of human beings into a complex and simultaneously natural interaction:

While the relationship that Native people have with the land certainly has a spiritual aspect to it, it is also a practical matter that balances respect with survival. It is an ethic that can be seen in the decisions and actions of a community and that is contained in the songs that Native people sing and the stories that they tell about the nature of the world and their place in it, about the webs of responsibilities that bind all things. Or, as the Mohawk writer Beth Brant put it, “We do not worship nature. We are part of it.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003). This is also thoughtfully discussed by Kristina Bidwell (née Fagan): Kristina Fagan, “What Stories Do: A Response to Episkenew,” review of *Taking Back our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy and Healing*, by Joanne Episkenew, *Canadian Literature* 214 (Autumn 2012): 109–116.

<sup>18</sup> King, *About Stories*, 113–114.

Thus Indigenous stories represent the ethic with which Indigenous peoples approach their entire environment, including the complex relationships they have with the multiplicities of beings within. Indigenous stories are capable of inspiring both thought and action. Or, as anthropologist Julie Cruikshank writes in *Do Glaciers Listen?* “local knowledge is never crudely encapsulated in closed traditions, but is produced during human encounters. ... It is dynamic and complex, and it often links biophysical and social processes.”<sup>19</sup> A Tla’amin Elder concurred about the power of Tla’amin legends: “some of those funny little stories have kept me alive, you know.”<sup>20</sup> There are multiple layers to the interaction between Indigenous peoples and their environments where one informs the other and vice versa, and this multi-faceted, reciprocal relationship can be read or heard in Tla’amin legends such as the one about Mink and Wolf.

### *Challenges Interpreting Oral Stories*

Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank along with Indigenous academics from around the world, such as Maori Indigenous Education Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, mental health and Indigenous research methodologies scholar Shawn Wilson, Indigenous curriculum and research methods Associate Professor Margaret Kovach, and research methods Professor Bagele Chilisa, point to the important role of Indigenous locality and specificity in determining Indigenous meanings.<sup>21</sup> Linguist Honoré Watanabe describes how specific the Tla’amin language is to Sliammon, and breaks down some of the issues that Tla’amin-to-English translators face. However, even with these signposts, there will likely never be a fully fluent “outsider” listener, translator, and interpreter of Sliammon stories. In regard to the stories shared by Tla’amin Elder Elsie Paul in *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (?ams ta?aw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*, in the preface Watanabe describes this problem of translation:

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<sup>19</sup> Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 4.

<sup>20</sup> P8, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 5. In this context, the Elder described how the legend contained specific information that helped him out of dangerous situations as a mischievous child.

<sup>21</sup> This is tied to the specificity and locality of Indigenous territories.

Translating between the two languages is notoriously difficult, particularly when the two languages are as radically different as the two Elsie uses, Sliammon and English. Even though Elsie is fully fluent in English, she describes how she sometimes struggles to convey her thoughts, ideas, and especially the traditional teachings in English. Elsie often says that there is just no way to accurately translate from Sliammon to English.<sup>22</sup>

For the Tla'amin people, Paul and Watanabe both describe difficulty transferring concepts, and words, directly from Tla'amin into another language, due to a loss of cultural context. There are no doubt nuances that will be missed by even the most observant of guests in Tla'amin homes. Cruikshank discusses these challenges in her work with Alaskan Elders at all stages of the process. She explains that when turning oral collections into text, the context is often missing – who was speaking to whom, for what purpose and ends – and that, furthermore, written speech tends to freeze or “arrest”<sup>23</sup> a meaning. This captured moment of writing also fails to represent how a person spoke, what mood or inflections they conveyed, as well as the particularities of each language.

In addition to the specific narrative and sentence structure of Sliammon speech, Watanabe also describes differences in word order, word meaning, and word formation that present difficulties in translating Tla'amin language into English. Thus the English-speaking outsider is far removed from the Tla'amin reality, and, ultimately, this chapter<sup>24</sup> will only glimpse inside the Sliammon world from a dusty and opaque window that looks into a window, through a room and beyond to another window. Amongst the five versions I have read of the Mink and Wolf legend for this chapter, the main elements remain the same, but each Elder seems constrained by the time that they have with the interviewer or researcher with whom they shared the story. At the end of the version at the beginning of this chapter, the Elder is recorded as saying, “something like that,”<sup>25</sup> as if the whole story was still just beyond the reach of the listener. Likely this legend could

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<sup>22</sup> Honoré Watanabe, “A Note on the Sliammon Language,” in Elsie Paul, Paige Raibmon, and Harmony Johnson, eds., *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (?ams ta?aw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), xviii.

<sup>23</sup> Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?* 79.

<sup>24</sup> And this dissertation.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, 2.



have taken place over several nights, with embellishments such as song or side stories about each character.

These lessons are reiterated by professor of education Jo-Ann Archibald in her 2008 publication *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit*, written with other Coast Salish Elders. Archibald agrees that in addition to issues in translating language, context, and body language,<sup>26</sup> concerns about the historical context of storytelling persist:

Indigenous stories have lost much education and social value due to colonization, which resulted in weak translations from Aboriginal languages to English, stories shaped to fit a Western literate form, and stories adapted to fit a predominantly Western education system. The translations lose much of the original humour and meaning and are misinterpreted and/or appropriated by those who don't understand the connections and cultural teachings.<sup>27</sup>

This is an important observation about how the efforts that have been made to create cross-cultural understanding and dialogue have contributed to changing the focus and meaning of Indigenous stories. Their new contexts assume a different audience that lacks Tla'amin cultural and historical understandings necessary to analyze and interpret the stories. This is an organic as well as colonialist process, built out of the way that human life and history has happened and will continue to change and transform.

Several historians have found ways to demonstrate the way that stories reflect change, both throughout colonization and before. Anthropologist Anthony Wonderley writes,

Exploring what happens over time is another form of comparison, one that really is the most rudimentary exercise in historical research. To draw a conclusion about the temporal dimension, one must understand something about a phenomenon as it was at, minimally, two points in a time. The evidence is lined up chronologically, and what was said earlier is compared to what was said later.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Cruikshank, *Do Glacier's Listen ?* 17.

<sup>27</sup> Jo-Ann Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony Wonderley, *At the Font of the Marvelous: Exploring Oral Narrative and Mythic Imagery of the Iroquois and Their Neighbours* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009), xxiv.

Wonderley advocates for a literary historiography of oral history, in many ways similar to the earlier practices of Boas and Barnett. More illustratively, Carlson has recently published an investigation of particular stories and understandings of oral history that describe how various Coast Salish groups have managed their collective identities over time. Carlson has acknowledged, in this work, the need for Indigenous groups to self-represent their identities, and for colonialism to be but one aspect of Indigenous stories. Carlson asserts, “Once history is resituated so that Aboriginal people can be appreciated not only as minor players on the stage of Indian-white relations but as leading characters in plays that they increasingly co-author if not compose outright themselves, interesting images of the dynamics within Indigenous society emerge.”<sup>29</sup> The historian can help piece together historical changes that have affected the intellectual history of Indigenous peoples, but this comes with pitfalls inherent in colonialism, including changing audiences for stories and issues in translation. This is clear in Ambrose Wilson’s recording of the story of Mink and Wolf, where many physical aspects of the telling of the story are lost on the page.

The Tla’amin stories shared here are stories that explicitly referred to houses in English, as such; they are subject to the vagaries of translation in addition to temporal changes in theme. However, they have been selected both for the use of that language and also for their temporal position in the later period under discussion. Overall, I conclude that despite all of the changes described throughout this dissertation, Tla’amin houses continued to be a symbolic reference to forms of power, kin relationships, and spirituality for Tla’amin families.

#### *Control in the House: Mink Murders Wolf then Displays His Head*

In the story that opened this chapter, Mink murders Wolf, then keeps and displays Wolf’s head. The following is a portion of the same story told by another Elder, Noel George Harry, ten years previous:

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<sup>29</sup> Keith Carlson, *The Power of Place, The Problem of Time: Aboriginal Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Cauldron of Colonialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 29.

he just took the head, goes home and puts the Wolf's head in the house, puts it on top of the fire, just the head. ...

... [the Wolf's mother] wanted to kill Mink. Somebody came in to see Mink, people over there want to see you, in the big house there. I will go after, see you at the big house there. I will go after awhile, the people waited, waited, pretty soon that fellow come, he talked to Mink, Hurry Mink, if you go, they will kill you in the house.<sup>30</sup>

Mink subjugates Wolf by not only murdering him but placing his head in Mink's own personal territory, the fire in his house. In turn, Mink is requested to meet his final end in the "big house." In both instances, the house is where a victory over one's enemies is celebrated or takes place. This reinforces its role as personal territory, where the house's inhabitants have enough control to attempt and flaunt murder. The house owners, either Mink or the Wolves, have authority over others who enter.



Figure 2.2. Mink<sup>31</sup>

### *Does this Story Belong Here?*

In 2015 several of the Tla'amin members I asked about this story either did not recognize it or said that it was from another reserve. However, at least three different

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<sup>30</sup> Noel George Harry, interview by John Davies, May 26, 1969. N.G.Har. Tape # S175. NGHstrongman, stories.wpd. 8–9.

<sup>31</sup> "A group representing Canadian mink breeders is offering a \$100,000 reward, after hundreds of minks were freed from a Brant County farm," photo, by Daniel Arndt, from CBC News article by Max Leighton, May 4, 2016, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/minks-reward-brant-ontario-1.3564917>.

Elders shared similar variations of the story with researchers in the late 1960s and 1970s in Sliammon. In 2015 an Elder stated that wolves were just not physically near enough to be a species that would be in a Tla'amin story: "That Mink story is from a different reserve, he's Homalco. Church House ... They'd be the Wolf kind over there. We didn't have very much of that until after the fire. More wildlife where they're from. They have grizzly bears there. ... They're the ones with more wildlife, the bear and the wolf."<sup>32</sup> This Elder and others also thought this particular story was too violent. Another said, in 2015, "I don't recall hearing that story. There's a lot of stories about Mink yet, but there's usually a punch line or joke in it. ... This sounds pretty serious."<sup>33</sup> However, in another discussion two Elders explained, "Wolf was always a trickster, was always tricking Mink to into doing something he didn't want to do, or shouldn't do. Mink was always trying to get revenge on Wolf. Mink got his revenge."<sup>34</sup> The other Elder suggested that "Mink's not that big of an animal and he outsmarted a wolf. Kind of like us, we're small in a big world."<sup>35</sup> Although some of the Elders I spoke to thought that this story was from another community, two Elders did believe it contained important messages of knowledge of animal behaviour, personal strength, and wiliness that Tla'amin could use today.

Another Elder thought that perhaps many Tla'amin people of today missed out on opportunities to hear these particular legends. She explained that, while some in their family had the opportunity to participate in storytelling and listening, this was uncommon:

My children's Dad was fully immersed in legends. ... and he was highly respected. ... My children's father ... was raised traditionally and he heard all the stories from the Elders of the time. ... So he was raised in a way that was totally different because he did indicate that he thought everyone had heard what he was taught and what he heard. ... he soon learnt it wasn't [the case].<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> P3, 2015, 2.

<sup>33</sup> P1, interview with P2, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 5, 2015, transcript, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>35</sup> P2, interview with P1, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 1, 2015, transcript, 5.

<sup>36</sup> P10, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 2.

Another Elder shared this view, stating that although they had the opportunity to hear legends about Mink, the intrusion of colonialism through the residential school system undid what had been a family practice, to tell stories about Mink: “I wish I would remember all the Mink stories that my Grandmother told me. I was fortunate as a young boy to go through that. But, again, all of those memories of Mink stories were all totally erased in residential school.”<sup>37</sup> Another explained that they thought the geographic location of Sliammon made it an easy target for Church authorities and other conveyors of colonialism that erased Tla’amin memories of legends such as these:

Those kind of legends I don’t remember myself. ... Not so much here in Sliammon that I’ve heard those kind of stories. ... Even now today, nobody talked about anything, the only way I would hear about it today is if it is in our language system, which I have books on. ... The easiest way to put it is Sliammon is centrally located. It goes back even to my grandmothers’ and probably even my great grandmother’s part of it, we were already being converted to another world. ... Mainly through the Catholic Church through the government.<sup>38</sup>

While some Elders recoiled at the violent elements of this story, each of them expressed wistfulness at the loss of these legends.



Figure 2.3. Wolf with Catch<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> P5, 18.

<sup>38</sup> P6, interviewed by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 8.

<sup>39</sup> “Wolves that live on islands off the BC coast eat mostly fish, such as salmon and shellfish such as clams and mussels,” photo, by Guillaume Mazille/Raincoast Conservation Foundation, from CBC News

### *Control in the House: Respect and Survival*

In this interpretation, the Tla'amin house, identified by Mink and Wolf as a site of control and territory, is still considered a place where “respect” for others was paramount. For example, an Elder described how the summer shacks that Tla'amin people used seasonally and then vacated were historically a respected site of territory although they maybe empty when another family arrived,

It was all seasonal. You'd stay one place for summer, get all your food, dry it and in the winter time bring all your food but leave your lean-to or shack. In those days there was such thing as respect among the people. You didn't go into someone else's place and ravage or steal. Even when I was a young boy we didn't have to lock our doors because there was a lot of respect and honesty in those days you could've left your stuff.<sup>40</sup>

There was a time in memory that Tla'amin respected the houses of others, even when their inhabitants were elsewhere. The house, as described through stories and recollections of seasonal homes, could be a powerful site of personal territory and control.

The house was the site of decision making and building connections and alliances. Male leaders of important families would hold counsel in front of their longhouses, making major family and community decisions. The longhouse operated as a symbol of the authority of its inhabitant within the community. Even more, the house was the site of building connections with others, establishing social norms of respect and property rights, and ensuring the stability of the family unit, which, as Barnett suggests, was essential to personal well-being:

a person could subsist, after a fashion, directly upon the produces of nature, but, beyond a subsistence level, cooperation was necessary in order to obtain many commodities used in everyday living. ... if he wanted to live with other people, a man had to respect their property rights in hunting and fishing just as he expected

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article by Emily Chung, June 10, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/wolves-on-b-c-s-islands-mainland-genetically-different-1.2669964>.

<sup>40</sup> P1, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 5, 2011, transcript, 4.

others to respect his privileges in his domain. If he had no such privileges, he was completely dependent on the bounty and good will of those who had.<sup>41</sup>

Connection to family households was imperative for individual Tla'amin survival. Not only was one's connection to a household important materially but an individual's respect for their and others' "place" in the house additionally ensured that they would remain alive and well. Mink and Wolf's story is a dramatization of the important decisions that were made in Tla'amin houses and the authority that longhouse heads had over others within their physical space. Ultimately, respecting the headmen's authority within their space, the longhouse, meant survival, both physical and cultural.

Additionally, the physical structure of the longhouse, where families shared space in the centre of the longhouse and were cordoned off by cedar mats, suggests that the longhouse leadership was able to monitor the actions of family members within the house. The longhouse therefore operated as an Indigenous version of the Foucauldian panopticon in the time of the big house, Big House, and longhouse. This role was challenged directly throughout the twentieth century by the transition to houses that contained fewer family members, less intergenerational living, and more structured separation between family members. This may have created a vacuum of control within newly formulated Tla'amin homes, and changed the perception of personal territory within those homes, giving more power to children, for example.

The continued telling of the Mink and Wolf story by late-twentieth-century storytellers illustrates how this idea of the house as a site embodying personal authority and control over aspects of community life persisted in Tla'amin culture even after the loss of Indigenous home environments. According to Barnett, a large house represented the greater influence of a larger family. This influence was based on the conduct of all house inhabitants, as well as their male lead. His influence was limited by the support of others in the household: "he had no power whatever to enforce his own judgments or even the majority of his opinions on his house associates."<sup>42</sup> Despite all of this internal and external democracy, status was only maintained through the appropriate

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 244.

comportment of all family members, and to ensure this, each member must be required to live up to expectations in some way.<sup>43</sup> This belief in the need to behave in socially acceptable ways in order to maintain family status continues well into the twenty-first century. Several Tla'amin Elders referred to how important their behaviour was as a reflection on their family. For example, one had shared another story to demonstrate how respect could be restored to a family following an incident and then said, "if I did something wrong, and Elders would come and grab me and bring me before, in front of my family and say, 'Why is your child like this?' and that I would show shame on that family, so they would have to look after their child and rectify that."<sup>44</sup> A single space for all family members to gather under one roof would help ensure each member of a respected family maintained their status through strict control over each other's actions.

#### *Mink's big house and Wolf's Big House: The Meaning of Housing Sizes*

Mink's own house and the "big house" where he was taken also give clues to the purpose of a Tla'amin house in their history. For Tla'amin houses, size did matter. Some contemporary Tla'amin Elders agree that the size of a longhouse likely correlated to family sizes, and family size indicated family success.<sup>45</sup> However, the term "big house" had two meanings in recent history. Paul demonstrates these two approaches to big houses in her description of each. In 2014 she explained that her grandfather had "this *big*

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion on Coast Salish status see Keith Thor Carlson, "Early Nineteenth Century Stó:lō Social Structures and Government Assimilation Policy," in Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *You are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada's Pacific Coast History* (Chilliwack, Stó:lō Heritage Trust, 1996, 2003), 89–91. In an interview of Annie Dominic with Dave Dominic by Karen Galligos, 14 April 2003, Tiswkat.3 Annie\_Dave\_Domnic03.doc, 14, Dominic describes family status operation: "if you are a mean person or a bad child, your family would meet with you, they would not invite any stranger or white man to come here like what they call court. It is their own relatives, their own family that they called and got them together, you offer them tea and talk, they will talk to this bad child that doesn't listen, that is how they carried this out. My papa said our other papa, Timotey was fierce, like if something was to be kept secret within the family and you go and tell someone else and the word gets spread around, then everybody starts arguing because you told; that is why they keep it close to themselves and look up toward our Creator, like helping their child, boy or girl if they are bad, they are the ones that deal with that." Timotey's reputation is still golden today; perhaps the longevity of this legacy rests upon his ability to ensure that family issues remained within the family, leaving a good impression of his family's actions and demeanour on the rest of the community.

<sup>44</sup> P7, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011, transcript, 12.

<sup>45</sup> P5, 1-2, and P8, 2015, 1–4.



house – he always had the biggest of everything,” although she remembers spending time at the last “Big House” located on the Tla’amin reserve at the head of Theodosia Inlet.<sup>46</sup> There are some Tla’amin houses that were big because they housed many people, an indicator of strength and influence,<sup>47</sup> and others that were big to demonstrate a similar approach to status as their predecessors. The use of house size as an indicator of status differs from the purpose of a Big House, which held large ceremonies such as the potlatch and winter dance. An Elder explained, “the longhouses were for various ceremonies. Whether it was to welcome a marriage, or even a thanksgiving sort of a thing for all the bounty that the nation had acquired before the winter season. And to connect with your spirituality.”<sup>48</sup> Two possibilities exist for the house that Mink was brought to: a big house, sized for a well-respected Wolf family, or a Big House, where Wolf’s family held ceremonies. Either way, the stories do give the impression that Wolf’s house was more impressive than Mink’s.

While Mink’s house was possibly a longhouse with a fire featured in the middle, Wolf’s house was either a Big House or a big house. In this story it is not immediately clear if Mink’s house is a Big House or a big house. It is very likely that Wolf’s house is a Big House because dancing, in the first rendition of the story, is taking place when Mink is meant to be murdered. A Big House is used now for the ceremony of winter dancing, and was likely then also. If Mink’s house was a Big House, the structure sounds familiar. Paul relates that the Big House in Theodosia had spaces for families around the perimeter to sleep, “[w]ith a central fire in the middle.”<sup>49</sup> Another Elder described many fires as well as the respect shown to its owners in modern longhouses: “You’re supposed to be sitting up straight to watch what’s happening. You’re not supposed to be leaning back. ... that’s how you sit in the Big House, it’s too far to lean back. Gotta always be sitting at attention because you’re in somebody’s house. ... Big enough for three fires. Probably a fire at that wall, a fire at this wall, and a fire down that way. And that’s how

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<sup>46</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 71 and 120.

<sup>47</sup> Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 241.

<sup>48</sup> P5, 23.

<sup>49</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 72.

they kept the house warm.”<sup>50</sup> This passage reflects both the respectful attention shown to the owners of the house – the guests must stay alert in another’s house – and also, like in Mink’s house, the fire in the middle of the house. Mink’s house seems to have only one fire we are aware of, so it remains a mystery exactly how big his longhouse was.

A Tla’amin Elder suggested that some Tla’amin longhouses were for dances, a practice that identifies a longhouse as a Big House: “It was common practice for our community, the potlatch system and the longhouse system. ... I attended some of the longhouses right now, and ours was a little different in terms of ... subtle differences. ... our community had all the different animal dances. Whether it was the Wolf or the Bear dance or all of that.”<sup>51</sup> In this story, Mink’s house is likely a longhouse while Wolf’s is a Big House. This interpretation sits well with the fact that not all longhouses are Big Houses, which are reserved for highly respected people. It also adds to the story a dimension that helps to explain why, in some versions, Mink is jealous of Wolf’s good looks or respect in the community.<sup>52</sup> Wolf is able to host dances in his Big House, whereas Mink has a regular longhouse where he attempts to insert Wolf’s head to gain respect.

Additionally, this particular quotation suggests that, despite what another Elder said about the prevalence of wolves in the area, the winter dances of the Tla’amin people historically were inclusive of many animals, including the wolf. Potentially then, the physical presence or lack of wolves in the vicinity of Sliammon is immaterial to the historical presence of the story of Mink and Wolf in the community. The story could exist as a cultural remnant of an earlier time for Tla’amin people, even if wolves as a species were not found nearby in 2015.

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<sup>50</sup> p8, 19.

<sup>51</sup> p5, 23.

<sup>52</sup> In Rose Mitchell’s version, which appears in Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard, *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1983), 101, Mink “was jealous of other men. Nearby, in the village of the Wolf People, there was a highly respected man whom Mink thought was his rival. This man [was] the son of the Wolf Chief.” Mitchell’s version might be taken to reinforce the idea that Sliammon did not have Big Houses, since the Wolf Chief’s home was in another village.

Barnett writes that the Tla'amin people had “four or five”<sup>53</sup> Big Houses in the early 1800s. These Big Houses were in Grace Harbour, however, and represented the Tla'amin to their neighbours, the Klahoose and Homalco. This was where the three communities held their collective winter dance ceremonies. Barnett also describes the size of Tla'amin houses, the largest being one hundred feet long followed by the next largest at sixty-seven feet long.<sup>54</sup> Mink may have brought his kill to his Big House in the story as formerly told, but this may have translated into a big house in the later time period in which it was shared, when Big Houses were no longer common features. Or it may always have been simply a regular longhouse.

### *Conclusion*

From the time of Tla'amin longhouses, big houses or Big Houses, to the time of the Mink and Wolf legend's telling in 1969 and 1979, the ability to monitor and regulate family members' actions within the Tla'amin house had changed dramatically due to its complete makeover through Church and State interference. The stories kept alive by the community identify the traditional role of houses as status symbols; sites of personal power, authority, and control; seats of community-building through ceremonial and family gatherings; centres where decisions were made, alliances forged, and property rights established; and spaces intimately connected to the process of creating and reinforcing social norms and expectations of individual behaviour, maintaining family cohesiveness and control. The house plays a role in these stories, as both an actor and a location, and is seen as a political site. Much like the greater Tla'amin territory or other Indigenous territory relationships, the house can be seen as a site that has been shaped by and in turn shapes Tla'amin identity and action.

Although there is disagreement over the type of ceremonies hosted in Tla'amin longhouses in the past, Big Houses existed, although they may not have held the same types of ceremonies in each location. For example, it is possible that the potlatch Big House was at Grace Harbour, while large and respected families had Big Houses where

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<sup>53</sup> Barnett, 29.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 50.

they wintered and winter danced in Sliammon. The house is seen, through these legends and the discussion around them, as a political site. In their early occurrences in memory, they were seen as a place where important decisions, discussions, and ceremonies took place, and family cohesiveness and control was maintained.

When colonialist influences began dictating the shape and structure of the Tla'amin house, these physical and symbolic uses of the house were threatened by the transition to structures ill-adapted for these roles. These forces attempted to colonize the very language of housing, interfering with the legends told about them and making it a less viable proposition to refer to a longhouse, Big House, or big house without coming across as immodest or even, according to the Church and Canadian government, as immoral or illegal.

Despite the challenges in history and in translation, the houses featured in this Mink and Wolf legend reflect lessons about place that resonate with Tla'amin today. Echoes of the historical role of the Tla'amin house and the cultural values and traditions it helped to maintain continue to resound in the retelling of stories like this particular Mink and Wolf tale and in contemporary values and social norms that can be seen as reflecting those once intimately entwined with the longhouse structure. The Big House, a multi-family dwelling that hosted important ceremonies, may have generated an appreciation in Tla'amin for the big house, size being an important indicator of status and reputation, a visual reference to the historical Big House. Houses continue to be sites embodying the different power differentials that Tla'amin families have faced from the time of Big Houses into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Additionally, Tla'amin houses were and are – albeit in a modified way – places of education, and in particular sites of intergenerational learning, a topic that will be explored in further detail in the next chapter.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Educating Children in the Tla'amin House:**

#### **A Spatial Approach to Education through a Century of Change**

In the early twentieth century, social interactions between teachers and children defined Tla'amin educational practices. Spatially, education was situated both within the Tla'amin home and within specific sites on the landscape. Tla'amin children listened to Elders speak and they participated in hands-on experiential learning. As the community became increasingly settled onto the Indian Reserve, and families came to live almost exclusively in nuclear family houses with demarcated rooms and lockable doors, learning opportunities became spatially challenged. As the architecture around them changed, and as their territory was compromised by non-Native settlement and industrial developments, the Tla'amin also faced a more direct threat to their education system – the introduction of state-funded and Church-run residential schools which removed children from their communities. Nonetheless, the Tla'amin conceived and implemented adapted ways to transfer traditional knowledge from one generation to the next.<sup>1</sup>

Many works discuss contemporary Indigenous education, but the subject of Indigenous education history remains underdeveloped.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, certain recent scholarship into non-Indigenous education continues to suggest that “only a small minority of nonliterate cultures have had traditional equivalents to ‘designed learning.’”<sup>3</sup> According to biological anthropologist Melvin Konner, designed learning “entails at a

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<sup>1</sup> The residential school system is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>2</sup> For example Danika Overmars, “Indigenous Knowledge, Community and Education in a Western System: An Integrative Approach,” *First Peoples Child and Family Review* 5, no. 2 (2010): 88–95, Pavan Malreddy Kuma, “Aboriginal Education in Canada: A Postcolonial Analysis,” *AlterNative* 5, no. 1 (2009): 42–57, and Jessica Ball, “As if Indigenous Knowledge and Communities Mattered: Transformative Education in First Nations Communities in Canada,” *American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 3 and 4 (2004): 454–479.

<sup>3</sup> Melvin Konner, *The Evolution of Childhood* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 660.

minimum very deliberate teaching in relation to criteria of performance that adults feel must be met, including moral strictures, taboos, manners, and appropriate rules of adult behavior.”<sup>4</sup> This definition and interpretation seems to suggest that Indigenous societies were ill-equipped to educate their youth about core cultural beliefs and relationships, that they somehow operated and existed in ways that were inferior ways to Western societies. This incongruity demonstrates that considerable ignorance of historical Indigenous education systems remains.

Education is defined as “a means of learning, the way people prepare themselves for life.”<sup>5</sup> Likely this oversight in non-Indigenous academic circles is primarily because in Indigenous education, “learning and living were the same thing, and knowledge, judgment, and skill could never be separated.”<sup>6</sup> This lack of separation has made it difficult for outside observers to relate to Indigenous knowledge, its creation and transmission. Furthermore, when Indigenous scholars discuss Indigenous education, they have tended not to address examples grounded in specific historical time frames.<sup>7</sup> This lack of historical distinctions reinforces the idea of “Indigenous people... as members of a ‘timeless traditional culture:’ a harmonious, internally homogeneous, unchanging culture.”<sup>8</sup> Neither view supports a realistic understanding of what Indigenous education has meant historically. This lack of grounding allows for a shaky approach to future educational developments meant to build off of Indigenous traditions.

What we do know generally, based on solid scholarship in the field of Indigenous education, is that Indigenous education systems were characterized by three types of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 659.

<sup>5</sup> Sheila Watt-Clouture, “Honouring Our Past, Creating Our Future: Education in Northern and Remote Communities,” in *Aboriginal Education*, ed. Lynne Davis and Louise Lahache (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 114.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>7</sup> Marie Battiste’s book, *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 2013), for example, spends a chapter on the colonial intervention on Mi’kmaq Indigenous education historical but focuses on the future of Indigenous education as an opportunity for decolonization. Missing is an examination of historical Mi’kmaq approaches to education.

<sup>8</sup> Battiste, *Decolonizing Education*, 31.

knowledge: traditional, empirical, and revealed.<sup>9</sup> Each of these knowledges is taught through relationships. Traditional knowledge (ancestral knowledge of the region's environment, how it works, and the human relationship with that environment) is shared generationally, primarily passed down from Elders to young adults and children. Empirical knowledge is practical information that is learnt through repeated observation. Revealed knowledge, by way of contrast, is spiritual, and is literally revealed through "dreams, visions, and intuitions."<sup>10</sup>

These three knowledge systems came under various pressures, even attacks, by agents of settler colonialism and modernity. It is important, therefore, to historicize the way they operated and the way over time certain aspects of them came to be de-accentuated or emphasized depending on changing circumstances. Tla'amin children, for example, in the early to mid-twentieth century had opportunities to gain traditional, empirical, and revealed knowledge. These educational opportunities correspond easily to the definitions anthropologists have devised, including designed learning. However, as the spaces within which Tla'amin young people were taught and learned changed, methods of teaching were adapted. The learning spaces that Tla'amin children were accustomed to earlier in the twentieth century were an important aspect of experiential Indigenous teaching and learning. Education scholars Rod Gerber and Margaret Robertson assert,

When [children] accompany adults in the family to travel from place to place the children learn certain skill. ... Through some forms of guided participation or watching how more experienced people perform tasks and then practicing these tasks children learn to become competent to do them consistently and independently. ... *place* for indigenous children is something definite and tangible. It is much bigger than their actual home on a plot of land . ... *Place* is the basis of their identity. ... We can conclude that Indigenous children develop a comprehensive environmental knowledge. Such knowledge consists of highly specific information and skills to operate effectively with a particular physical

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<sup>9</sup> M. B. Castellano, "Updating Traditions of Aboriginal Knowledge," in *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts*, ed. B. L. Hall, G. J. S. Dei, and D. G. Rosenberg (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 21–36.

<sup>10</sup> Danika Overmars, "Indigenous Knowledge, Community and Education in a Western System: An Integrative Approach," *First Peoples Child and Family Review* 5, no. 2 (2010): 89.

environment, together with more cosmic environmental knowledge. ... children demonstrate a respect for the environment in which they live, function and play.<sup>11</sup>

Place, including the Tla'amin house, and connections between generations and other living entities such as family members, including plants, animals, and spiritual entities, created experiential learning for Indigenous children. The Tla'amin transmitted knowledge through these entities and spaces to young people in the early and mid-twentieth century. When their houses changed shape, so too did teaching emphasis.

### *Houses after the Great Fire of 1918*

Where historically Tla'amin houses were “lean-to style made with cedar shakes,”<sup>12</sup> as the twentieth century wore on the materials and appearances of Tla'amin homes changed drastically. After the Great Fire of 1918 houses were rebuilt in both familiar and new ways. Houses were added onto over time. As quoted above in Chapter Two, an Elder explains,

Years when they came back the homes that they built here were two room houses and they put additions on their houses, most people had additions – houses were built good. Stucco inside. Can always remember that part, the wood stove heat. Everybody had coal oil lamps or gaslights. Their new homes were built close to the road that went by. They had their lights to shine on the road for people walking by. ...

... Some had two separate buildings, kitchen, sleeping quarters with a porch linking the two. Two separate buildings, some had it that way and others were open concept. Kitchen was always by the door and always had a high ceiling because that's where they stored their dry food.<sup>13</sup>

In the early 1920s, while some Tla'amin homes remained “open concept,” others were gradually adding segregated spaces.

### *Houses in the 1930s: Sharing Open Spaces*

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<sup>11</sup> Rod Gerber and Margaret Robertson, “Interpreting the Variations in Children’s Views of Place, Environment, Society and the Future,” in *Children’s Lifeworlds: Locating Indigenous Voices*, ed. Rod Gerber and Margaret Robertson (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2008), 232.

<sup>12</sup> P4, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, March 8, 2011, transcript, 1.

<sup>13</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August, 2011, 5.



Throughout the 1930s rooms were added, but sleeping patterns indicate that Tla'amin were still desirous of sharing open spaces. One man recounted his grandparents' house in the late 1940s, built in the 1930s. This house was small, with the grandmother and grandchildren sharing one bedroom:

It was a one bedroom. It was down by the Church there. ... It was built in the 30s I think. My grandfather and grandmother were living in there before I was born. There was two of them and she had three kids. And it was a small little house too. My Granny had her bedroom right in the kitchen. There was a wood stove right there and the bed was right here. And it had one bedroom at that side. That's where her daughters were. ...  
... I stayed in my Granny's bed. ... There was a lot of room there.<sup>14</sup>

While her own daughters shared their bedroom, the grandmother took care of her grandchildren in their sleep, keeping them in the open space of her kitchen/bedroom. For his aunt's family, the growth of the family required additions:

I don't know where they put them in that time too, their house was so small some were sleeping on the floor. And then they put an addition on to their house, add to the house so it was more bigger. They used that for a kitchen then the other room was converted into a bedroom. The kids were still all over the place though. My Uncle he had 12, 14, kids!<sup>15</sup>

Additions were used to create extra space for expanding families, yet "the kids were still all over the place." Families attempted to accommodate their members, and this meant that many families shared an open space, and sometimes a solitary bed.

#### *Housing in the 1940s and 1950s: Additions and Segregations*

While some families were building additions to accommodate their growing families, their seasonal houses reflected the historical Tla'amin style. This same young person in the 1940s and early 1950s lived in a cedar shack in Theodosia amongst other places,

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<sup>14</sup> P15, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011, transcript, 11–12.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 12.

I lived in my grandfather's one. My grandfather had one like that. Three places he had. ... And that's one whole room, one piece, and the beds were all along the edge. And the fire was in the middle. ...

... And when we stayed in Texada [Island], that [our house there] was one whole room too.<sup>16</sup>

In Sliammon, which was becoming increasingly settled, houses were taking on more segregated spaces, while open concept houses continued to be available throughout the rest of Tla'amin territory.

For one family, like others, the creation of segregated spaces was an evolution that included changing ideas about who deserved privacy and gender and age relationships. An Elder described, "it was kitchen, living room, one bedroom, and then the children were born he built two more bedrooms, and a bathroom, and a kitchen. ... He did add-ons, he put two more big rooms. But there was already a bedroom and the living room."<sup>17</sup> In the beginning his parents slept in the bedroom, while the children slept in the living room. When the additions were built, boys slept in one room while girls slept in another.<sup>18</sup> In this way, the desire for family togetherness was emphasized in sleeping arrangements for children, which, in this household, meant a separate bed for the parents, and then for girls and boys throughout the late 1940s to 1950s.

Throughout the decades from 1920 to 1960, housing became more segregated as it became more Euro-Canadian in appearance, but Tla'amin people continued to live comfortably in shared spaces. In the late 1940s and 1950s a Tla'amin grandmother's house was, her grandchild remembers, "one big main room, which was the living room, kitchen, and two small bedrooms. She slept in one room and I slept in the other one. They were tiny, I remember. Probably just a bed could almost fit in there."<sup>19</sup> Her house was small; nevertheless, this grandmother privileged shared living and sharing space, "one big main room," over the segregated space of "tiny" bedrooms. In another family home in the mid- to late 1940s, an Elder recounts, "even our Dad, when he first got married to our

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>17</sup> P11, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 5, 2015, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4.

mother, they were living with my grandmother and grandfather, and, the bedroom was one room.”<sup>20</sup> Tla’amin people retained an acceptance of and use for communal, open spaces within their homes.

### *Housing in the 1950s and 1960s: The Department of Indian Affairs and Segregated Spaces*

The movement towards more segregated spaces in Tla’amin houses was gradual between the 1920s and 1950s. In the 1950s it was well under way as materials and blueprints for houses were provided by the Department of Indian Affairs. The introduction of partitioned bedrooms and the segregation of the Tla’amin house were complete by the end of the 1960s. An Elder explained, “most of the homes they built here, in the 1950s, were welfare homes, and then they redid it again and they got rid of the asbestos, gyp rock homes that they had. ... In the ’40s anyway, ’48, ’45. They’re only small little buildings and they built larger ones.”<sup>21</sup> In the 1950s, these government-provided homes were two-room houses: “those houses were well built, built good enough, but they weren’t insulated, that’s why they were cold. And they were like only, one-bedroom homes.”<sup>22</sup> The transition was mostly complete by 1969, when “modern houses were already here by then, ’69.”<sup>23</sup> These modern houses reflected the standards of the Department of Indian Affairs, a former chief explained: “In 1961 it took two years to build. When the Department of Indian Affairs gave you a house, they just came with a truck and dumped the lumber there, ‘Here’s your house.’”<sup>24</sup> The houses required a lot of additional work by Tla’amin people to adapt them to their own preferences in the 1960s, which now included, for instance, “1, 2, 3 large bedrooms and one downstairs for the boys.”<sup>25</sup> The transition was complete with the arrival in 1969 of the Ladner homes, army barrack homes that were barged directly to the reserve and installed backwards.

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<sup>20</sup> P5, interview with P7, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 20.

<sup>21</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, September 30, 2015, 10.

<sup>22</sup> P6, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 7.

<sup>23</sup> P3, 2015, 1.

<sup>24</sup> P4, 3.

<sup>25</sup> P10, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 10.

*Places to Learn: The Impact of Segregated Space in the House*

These changes in the inner structure of the Tla'amin house were important, because in the early twentieth century Tla'amin teaching occurred in a central space, and older family members commanded their pupils' attention through their orality, physical centrality in the space, and the paucity of other entertainment options in the winter darkness. Elsie Paul, Elder and author of *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder* (2014), received her education from the late 1930s to probably the mid 1940s (she was born in 1931) in a way that was thoroughly “designed” as well as spatially located and experiential. After receiving her lessons, she was required to remember details and to think critically about the teachings she received. She was given an oral exam of sorts: “Elders taught her to remain receptive to new meanings and lessons regardless of how many times she had heard a story before, and they frequently asked her to explain what she had learned from a particular telling.”<sup>26</sup> When asked to “explain what she had learned,” Paul was being asked to reflect, remember, and then reproduce in her own words the stories she had been given. This learning had specific teachers, in a specific time, and in a specific place. Paul described, “In the winter months when the darkness came early and you’d sit by the open fire or by the stove, and the grandparents or your parents would tell stories – legends. And that was *so* entertaining. And those legends always had a moral story to the story. So that was your classroom. ... And you had to pay attention!”<sup>27</sup> Paul received, reviewed, and responded to important lessons from her grandparents or parents in an open space within her house. These lessons were purposeful, but depended on the storyteller, her Elders, the location, the fire

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<sup>26</sup> Paige Raibmon, “Introduction: Listening to ʔəms taʔaw,” in *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔəms taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*, by Elsie Paul in collaboration with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 148. Other examples include Annie Dominic with Dave Dominic interviewed by Karen Galligos, 14 April 2003, Tiswkat.3 Annie\_Dave\_Domnic03.doc, 13, Rose Mitchell with Elizabeth Harry interviewed by Randy Bouchard, date unknown, OTH.15.doc, 20, Phyllis Dominick with Ramona Dominick interviewed by Evan Adams and Kerri Timothy, 16 May 1996, MIS.20.A.doc, 25.

or the stove, and how entertaining or thought-provoking they were to give the desired effect on the pupil.

Other Indigenous peoples shared Paul's Tla'amin experience of spatially-dependent formalized knowledge transmission. Essayist and novelist Leslie Marmon Silko described that, for the Pueblo people, "everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest person, was expected to listen and be able to recall or tell a portion of ... a narrative account or story. Thus the remembering and the telling were a communal process,"<sup>28</sup> and at the same time, "place, nearly always plays a central role in the Pueblo narratives."<sup>29</sup> Indigenous education across Turtle Island had made extensive use of the situated person and landscape to ensure important knowledge was passed from generation to generation.

Paul situates some of her Tla'amin learning in the house, encircling a common human comfort, the warmth and light of the fire or stove. She recalls how space was managed for teaching, and how this was challenged by the ability to send children to their rooms:

You were a part of the family unit. You are there in the circle, in the company of your Elders. The children were there, they listened attentively. ... You sat with the Elders in a good way. ... You were included. You were not, "Go off to your room!" Unless they had something very specific that they didn't want the children to hear. But generally it was always bringin' the children together to listen to conversations with the Elders. That was all part of the teachin' to be respectful: "When people are talking, you listen. ... Don't get up and walk out of the room. ... You do not go and touch things that don't belong to you. You be respectful of that house, those people that live in the house. ... You're gonna sit next to me."<sup>30</sup>

The lesson implied by this passage is that children were expected to remain in the central space shared by visitors and hosts: "you are there in the circle, in the company of your Elders." Children visited other houses purposefully to receive their education, and this was an expected role for this site, Paul explains: "it was always bringin' the children together to listen to conversations with the Elders. That was all part of the teachin' to be

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<sup>28</sup> Leslie Marmon Silko, "Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories," in *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, ed. Simon Ortiz (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>30</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 167.

respectful.” The adoption of isolated bedrooms that accompanied the introduction of Western-style housing may have disrupted this learning for both teachers and children, as children could then be confined instead of enveloped by the learning that can take place just being amongst adults, as well as that purposefully taught by adults. Paul decries this practice: “You were not, ‘Go off to your room!’” and then reiterates that children were not to leave the circle of teaching: “don’t get up and walk out of the room.” Paul shares a practice of visiting that was central to intergenerational sharing within an open space, and subtly suggests that the ability to leave rooms, or hide in rooms, negatively affected these relationships and learning opportunities.

The option to segregate family members in rooms may have disrupted the relationship between teacher and learner. A brick fireplace or cast iron stove may not have held the same allure for children as had the central sites in open-concept longhouses or shacks. Children now had their own personal items and met with playmates and friends in bedrooms separated from the rest of the house by walls and closing doors. Being tucked away from family members behind closed doors may have additionally created a barrier to kin with knowledge to share. Silko acknowledges the power of doors as physical barriers to learning when she discusses her aunt’s education: “The old woman would always ask the youngest child in the room to go open the door. ‘Go open the door,’ her grandmother would say, ‘Go open the door so our esteemed ancestors may bring us the precious gift of their stories.’”<sup>31</sup> Silko’s great-grandmother acknowledged that physical barriers had educational as well as spiritual consequences for children, and could operate to inhibit sharing across these worlds. Within the house, for Indigenous education, relationship to space, including fires or stoves, open gathering spaces or closed rooms, played an important and changing role in knowledge transmission. In Sliammon, children’s bedrooms disrupted the space that was intended for sharing education.

In another Indigenous context Passamaquoddy Elder Margaret Paul related, “Everyone now all have modern houses and are more separated. It hinders our Native traditions, because we are being blocked off that sense of belonging and sharing. When I

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<sup>31</sup> Silko, “Landscapes,” 21.

used to live down home, when I was kid, there were rooms divided but there was that great big long room where everybody slept.”<sup>32</sup> In diverse areas of North America, west, south, and east, Indigenous peoples have commented on the architectural changes that might undermine the sharing of Indigenous knowledge. For the Tla’amin people, however, several strategies were used throughout the twentieth century to combat this potential loss.

### *Teaching: The Role of Elder Family Members*

In Sliammon, the development first of single-family dwellings (which occurred largely by the beginning of the twentieth century) and then separate bedrooms (which developed throughout the mid-twentieth century) disrupted the space that was intended for sharing education. Part of this change may be understood in terms of the feeling of unfamiliarity that family members began to have in homes that were no longer communally shared. Paul makes very clear that visiting other homes does not create familiarity between homeowners and visiting children when she describes the directions given to the child: “You be respectful of that house, those people that live in the house. ... You’re gonna sit next to me.”<sup>33</sup> Previously, in the longhouse, however, Tla’amin Elder Rose Mitchell suggests that, because of the multi-family dwelling style, “aunts and uncles were as responsible as the parents themselves for the upbringing of the household children.”<sup>34</sup> Historically, Tla’amin children could sit with any older family member. In single-family dwellings of the twentieth century, parents had more direct control over their own children, while other family members had less responsibility, but continued to expect that others’ children would be respectful of them and their space.

Despite this loss of communal extended family space in the earlier twentieth century, in the 1920s or 1930s, teaching by elder family members was guided and

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<sup>32</sup> Margaret Paul, “Every Song you Sing Just Keeps Getting Better and Better,” in *In the Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*, ed. Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>33</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 167.

<sup>34</sup> Rose Mitchell, her husband Bill Mitchell, and friend Jeannine Dominick were the main informants for Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard. Kennedy, Dorothy, and Randy Bouchard. *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands*. (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1983), 59.

managed. Young people gathered knowledge “not only from the parents or the grandparents, they always had a little gathering, talk things over and have us listen, telling us what life was all about and all that. We did learn a lot from our parents, our grandparents and from our elders, like you say, like today, you get some information, it was the same a long time ago.”<sup>35</sup> Thus there were some times that were set aside specifically for knowledge sharing, and children were both invited and expected to participate. These “gatherings” were likely more planned than they had been earlier, because families stepped outside of their own homes and into others.

Without the convenience of multi-family dwellings, teaching by elder family members was more deliberate. Family members came out of their own homes into other family homes to share stories, values, and ultimately, an education. One grandfather in the early twentieth century, an Elder recounted, “was a great one for coming to talk to us, even though my dad was already married. He used to come to our house every night and preach to my dad to be good to his wife and to look after his children then he ended up staying and telling us stories. We would all sit and listen, a whole bunch of us kids would sit and listen and he would tell us stories. He was a really a [*sic*] good grandfather.”<sup>36</sup> The disconnect between family members that grew as a result of the demise of longhouses and the establishment of single-family houses is acknowledged in this short passage, because this man was considered “really a good grandfather,” who was “a great one for coming to talk to us, *even though my Dad was already married,*” (emphasis added). Whereas in the time of the longhouse, or even the open-concept cedar shack, the family may have stayed in one house together regardless of marriage, this grandfather came out of his own home and into his own child’s house to ensure that his grandchildren (and the whole family) received the information they needed. These concerted efforts by Elders to sit, gather children, and share continued into the mid-twentieth century, in the 1930s and

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<sup>35</sup> Agnes McGee interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, July 24, 1998, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS.48.49.50.51 Audiocassette 48, 49, 50, and 51, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 68.

<sup>36</sup> Phyllis Dominick and Ramona Dominick interview by Evan Adams and Kerri Timothy, May 16, 1996, MIS.20 Audiocassette MIS 20 MIS.20.A.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 25.



1940s: “And just hearing the legends and stories being just around my grandparents and their friends. Spent a lot of time, evenings, just sitting around listening to stories and legends which I thoroughly enjoyed. Because we didn’t have tv.”<sup>37</sup> Families continued throughout the early twentieth century to set aside time and space for education to occur. Elder family members took it upon themselves to create time and places for children to learn important Tla’amin lessons.

In other Tla’amin memories, central sites continued to be used for sharing, for example, the family dinner table in the 1930s and 1940s: “[Teaching wasn’t given at] any specific time, sometimes it would be at the dinner table ... everybody would get together and talk, telling stories and I would be sitting there with them, they told me to be quiet and listen, so that I would know these things and that when I grew up, I would not be oblivious to our background.”<sup>38</sup> In this passage the dinner table took the place of the stove or fire, and children continued to receive direction that this was their place, to sit and listen respectfully to Elders wherever and whenever the opportunity arose. Instead of the more formalized directives from family members, however, this passage suggests that any gathering for conversation was seen as important education for young minds.

However, despite families’ best and deliberate efforts, children and youth found ways to divert their attention from their Elders’ teachings. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, one person recalled that an elderly man took it upon himself to share knowledge as if it was his only purpose: “old man used to sit down for hours and tell me stories, way back. Maybe I don’t listen, I guess, it just, soon as he finish, it’s gone.”<sup>39</sup> This “old man”

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<sup>37</sup> Elsie Paul interview by Debbie Dan and Graeme Murray, September 29, 2010, ACC # 2010.87 OBJ.ID. 2010.87.1, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, Powell River, BC.

<sup>38</sup> Annie Dominic, interview with Dave Dominic, by Karen Galligos, April 14, 2003, Tiswkat.3 Annie\_Dave\_Domnic03.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 13. Also Xai’Xais Elder Mary Ann Mason describes being drilled by her grandparents over several days to learn her cultural expectations, while she simultaneously attended residential school. Mary Ann Mason, “That’s Why I Figure, Well, This Is a Chance for Me to Tell. It Was a Tough Life,” in *The Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*, ed. Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 418.

<sup>39</sup> Bennie Charlie, interview with Hilda Charlie, Henry Bob, Rita Lessard, Charlie Bob and Elsie Paul, by Maynard Harry, January 5, 1996, MIS.10 Audiocassette MIS 10. MIS.10.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 35.

took time out of his day, sat down, shared what he needed to share, and left immediately after. There seems to be no other aspect to the visit than this teaching moment. However, the child did not cherish the stories, and he took his opportunity as soon as possible to vacate the space this teacher provided. Despite the efforts of the teacher to ensure that education was shared through his words and presence, the pupil was not tied to the moment in a meaningful way, and left with, potentially, little learning.<sup>40</sup>

By the 1950s there were even fewer opportunities for “gatherings” to share knowledge. One man explained,

when I was a kid ... there was really no gathering unless you went to visit them. And the only reason I went to visit them was to help the Elders out, which my Granny used to tell me that if you don't have anything to do, you go and do chores for the Elders, right. Not so much here in Sliammon that I've heard those kind of stories. Or culture thing or whatever. To me, I thought they were just, I don't know how to put it, tall tales or something, to that nature.<sup>41</sup>

Although this young man was able to live with and learn valuable cultural teachings about helping Elders from his own grandmother, his ability to learn about other important cultural lessons, or stories, was completely self-directed and tied to “chores.” He had difficulty considering these stories – “tall tales or something” – to be important insights, since they happened in passing, without a specific site, occasion, or reason. Throughout this time period, families took it upon themselves to manage these new spaces and the needs for Indigenous Tla'amin education through specific efforts to create the time and space for learning, as well as through the storytelling itself. From the mid-1950s or early 1960s, sharing knowledge for the Tla'amin people was a central and important aspect of daily life, but children could now take opportunities to escape into their own rooms, and out of other peoples' houses.

### *Changing Places in Stories: Changing Spaces in Life*

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<sup>40</sup> Bennie Charlie, interview by Dana Lepofsky and Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, June 24, 2013, personal notes. At that time, Charlie's house was likely a two-bedroom home with a living room and kitchen. Charlie shared a separate bedroom shared with his siblings. His mother slept in the living room, and the family left the second bedroom empty.

<sup>41</sup> P6, 8.

As family members attempted to adapt to the changes in houses through formal requests to teach, they also ensured that new versions of stories reflected the new places and spaces that children encountered. In the 1950s a young boy asked his Uncle to share a story specifically designated for bedtime, which his Uncle updated:

I was told that the story was for bedtime, when I wanted to go to sleep and I just wasn't sleepy enough so my mom would ask Marshall Dominic, my Uncle to tell the story. I must have heard it a hundred times, but would never get sick of it. He was very creative too, he wouldn't tell it in the old traditional way. He'd tell a story and it was his birthday and all these characters were mad at him, and they wanted to teach him a lesson, so they said lets put up a party and we will assassinate him or beat him up or whatever. But Mink had powers so when he got cornered, I guess it would start off in big hollow stump where the party would be inside, and they would block the door and he commanded that a knothole would open up large enough for him to jump through and he would jump through it, and escape. Then he would run down to the beach and jump on the log and away he'd go. That sort of story and Marshall would recreate it. He would say instead of a stump, he would say dance hall, or instead of a knothole, he would say maybe a window, instead of a log he would say rowboat. And in the next story, it would from a rowboat to a speed boat with a kicker. He'd step it up so the story would sound newer.<sup>42</sup>

This young man's uncle was charged with storytelling and used this opportunity to reflect the places and challenges his nephew might find in his life. His explicit invitation to do so, and his willingness, represents an extended family approach to Indigenous education in Sliammon, much like the Elders' teaching around the dinner table above. Furthermore, by situating his story in a context the child was familiar with, he helped this child build mastery over an environment that was relatively new to both of them.

His storytelling style and the directive from the child's parents are two separate strategies for overcoming the loss of historical Tla'amin spaces set aside for education. His efforts through storytelling to situate his nephew, both in his relationship to the environment (knot hole) and to a changing landscape (dancehall), corresponds to gender

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Peters, interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, September 27, 1996, MIS.40.41 Audiocassette MIS.40.41 MIS.40.41.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 12.

studies Professor Mishuana Goeman's conception of "mental maps" as a way to tie Indigenous peoples to their ancestors and simultaneously the future. Goeman writes,

These mental maps found in the stories shape relationships around us and serve to imagine community and identity differently. ... Native narrative maps often conflict, perhaps add to the story, or only tell certain parts. Stories and knowledge of certain places can belong to particular families, clans or individuals. ... While narratives and maps help construct and define worldviews, they are not determined and always open for negotiation.<sup>43</sup>

Thus the storyteller was drawing a mental map for his nephew, helping him to grasp interrelationships that were in flux in Tla'amin territory, as he himself negotiated sharing their Indigenous knowledge in new spaces. This Uncle stepped out of his own house, into his sibling's house, possibly into his nephew's bedroom, to share a story meant for a specific time, and, formerly, place, in a new storytelling approach to help them both learn about and master a different reality.

#### *Adult Negotiation of New Spaces*

Certainly the presence of bedrooms made an impact on intergenerational knowledge sharing. Sometimes it was Elders who eschewed the presence of children and used the act of "sending children to their bedroom" as a strategy for preventing their participation in adult conversation. Another person who was a child in the 1950s or 1960s experienced limited knowledge transmission between generations because her "Granny felt that [she and her siblings] were too young to understand an older person's conversation."<sup>44</sup> She described how her own Granny's belief about children's interaction with Elders and other adults was different from that of other Tla'amin households: "When I went to your house, you guys were either cleaning up or peeling potatoes. You guys were talking amongst yourselves; that was no-no in my house. Elders talked over there, and kids stayed in this room, that's the way it was. So you were told, If somebody came in that was older than

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<sup>43</sup> Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 25.

<sup>44</sup> Emily August, interview by Karen Galligos, October 5, 1996, MIS.42.43 Audiocassette MIS 42 and 43, trans. Karen Galligos, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 11.

me, I'd get up and leave automatically because that's the way she taught me."<sup>45</sup> Thus, in addition to her grandmother's rules about adult conversations, her grandmother explicitly tied this rule to the house. "Elders talked over there, and kids stayed in this room" suggests that the ability to partition children was seen by this woman as an opportunity to partition generational relationships as well.

Another Elder, who was a young boy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, had a similar experience with doors but did not let that deter him. He recalls,

[I] used to sneak and listen. I was fortunate in the sense that, I still as a young boy remember things that happened in terms of the leadership in our community... it was just the grown ups... the individuals that came to support any type of consultation whatever the topic was, or any type of decision that was in the best interest of the community. I'd be always listening through the bedroom door because there were grown up people doing business and I respected them each. We were all like that, we were all told never to be a *squeech*, never to be a bother to them.<sup>46</sup>

Again, in this example elder family members used doors to limit the involvement of young people hearing or being a part of their conversation. This segregation of learning and intergenerational sharing would not have been possible in more open, communal style house, even one with separate areas for families. Although, another Elder who was a young boy in the late 1940s does remember a different family dynamic: "at my Grandmother's we used to have to keep quiet, you know. Or go outside, but we didn't run around screaming either. You stayed quiet in those days. Children should be seen and not heard. And that was good. There was a lot of teaching ... out of respect ... respect the Elders."<sup>47</sup> This example, while slightly earlier than the other, also demonstrates that while children maybe asked to go play outside, they had the option to stay indoors if they were quiet. The use of bedrooms to create this separation removed the opportunity for young people to *hear* conversations without participating in them, and young people interested

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> P5, 40.

<sup>47</sup> P9, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 3, 2015, transcript, 10.

in this type of learning had to circumvent their Elders' efforts. With this new style of housing introduced, generations were able to cut themselves off from one another.

### *Recreating Close Grandparent–Grandchild Relationships for Learning*

Children raised by their grandparents had advantages in their Tla'amin education during the mid-twentieth century. Where once several generations shared a longhouse as part of the same family group, now only children who were kept by their grandparents benefited through close proximity to their Elders' knowledge and experience. This may have been an economic imperative, but it had lasting effects in terms of language and cultural retention. One man recalled, "[I] used to live with my Grandmother right from June 'til September because my Dad was a fisherman and they left us all summer. ... That's where I learnt to speak my language because they never spoke it at home."<sup>48</sup> Although in the 1940s and 1950s many Tla'amin families separated for economic reasons, the resulting attachments between children and grandparents helped facilitate intergenerational knowledge sharing. This continued at least until the 1960s for some fortunate families. For example, another mother in the 1960s shared, "We often had the grandparents there, they would babysit because at that time I started to work at the hospital. ... that's where the children would sit and hear stories. Or they're outside, helping with wood for fishing time. That's where they learnt from the grandparents and the aunties, they were very culturally raised because my mother-in-law never went to school in her life."<sup>49</sup> Ironically, the economic imperative for this return to a type of intergenerational living came out of new capitalist pressures and influences on housing ideals. She explained, "I remember what brought me to work was we needed to improve our house condition. ... We needed furniture, beds especially for our children. ... Then we needed a car because children were playing sports and we had to get them into town."<sup>50</sup> Her children benefited, however, from these shifting values, through the opportunity for proximity to their grandparents and elder family members.

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<sup>48</sup> P11, 2.

<sup>49</sup> P10, 10–11.

<sup>50</sup> P10, 11.

Tla'amin people today would say that this system continues to exist. Another Tla'amin Elder described intergenerational sharing as a purposeful effort by families to ensure knowledge transfer: “the grandfathers and grandmothers of this reserve took care of their grandkids, always had one, my grandmother had me. And the other boys and girls were brought up by their grandparents. In the evening start telling you bedtime stories, Mink was King of the world.”<sup>51</sup> In this way, families ensured that at least one of their children was privy to the knowledge transmission that others could no longer access. Instead of an elder family member physically moving between houses, children were placed directly with their grandparents to facilitate important learning.

### *Learning on the Land: A Safe Space*

Important learning was also taught experientially within territorialized spaces.<sup>52</sup> The Tla'amin held territorial spaces dearly. Their closely related neighbours, the Sechelt, for instance are described as having had “*a strong sense of honouring the land*” that was passed through generations via “stories meant to be educative, teaching successive generations how to survive and live, while feeling deeply connected to their ancestors and the time in which the earth, sky and water were created.”<sup>53</sup> Learning happened not only in specific home environments with extended family but also in connection with embedded Tla'amin environmental territory. Elsie Paul shares a depiction of experiential learning within her community:

So it wasn't just the legends or the stories. It was by watchin' – watchin' your Elders, your grandparents, the adults in what they did. How they lived, how they gathered, how they fished, how they hunted, how women wove baskets, how they went and gathered roots. ... You were always brought along. So when the older women went root diggin', you went along – the children went along. ... every step of the way, everything they did around root diggin' was really important to pay attention.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> p3, 2.

<sup>52</sup> The surrounding environment that the Tla'amin consider their territory, as it was used throughout the year through significant seasonal travel.

<sup>53</sup> Rita L. Irwin, Tony Rogers, and Yuh-Yao Wan, “Making Connections through Cultural Memory, Cultural Performance, and Cultural Translation,” *Studies in Art Education* 40, no. 3 (1999): 201.

<sup>54</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 151. And in regard to making baskets, 156–157.

Paul describes the need to watch, but also suggests how tied these lessons were to the spaces in which they were given, where children were “brought along” to watch and participate with their Elders, as an important component of their “legends or the stories” education.

A Tla’amin Elder explained how throughout the 1940s and 1950s “survival” or territorially based education was protected while cultural and spiritual knowledge was under attack from Church authorities. His grandparents chose to relocate from the reserve village to Lund (10 km farther north on Highway 101) because they felt this would enable them to better protect their cultural and spiritual practices. However, they ensured that important environmental lessons for survival were passed to him. He explains, “so my grandfather and grandmother lived in Lund for many years until they promised not to practice. So that’s why I missed out. But the teachings of hunting and survival were very important to her. Because in her days there was no such thing as teaching for a living.”<sup>55</sup> This Elder’s grandparents acknowledged their roles as teachers and chose to share the “teachings of hunting and survival” because these lessons, unlike their “beliefs, dancing, and all that,”<sup>56</sup> were accessible to their grandchildren despite the hostility of Church officials.

Tla’amin people taught by example and involved young people integrally in the food collection and preparation process: “they went everywhere looking for food. And they brought us along, teaching us how to look for food. So when we grew up we could help ourselves.”<sup>57</sup> The children participated in “digging clams, braiding clams, drying red snapper and cod. ... That is why they needed us to go along. We put the bark on the hooks. Then they put that long line in the water. That is why they need us children ... to help.”<sup>58</sup> When it came to barbequing salmon, the children were needed: “it was us, we all

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<sup>55</sup> P4, interviewed by Omeasoo Wahpasiw, October 1, 2015, transcript, 1.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Mary George interviewed by Betty Wilson, July 23, 1995, Interviews Mary George 23/06-9528062012\_00005.pdf, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.



helped, we finished there, and even prepared the fish, we helped to hang fish.”<sup>59</sup> She also described fishing as children, wading in the water with ropes tied around their waists.<sup>60</sup> Through all of their daily activities, although Tla’amin children played<sup>61</sup> and enjoyed their youth, they were expected to be learning sites and skills for survival as well as the cultural expectations that went along with these activities.

Other grandparents in the time period fostered a desire to maintain mobility instead of conforming to overwhelming sedentarization and participation in the residential school project. This gave them an opportunity to pass on teachings as well as survival knowledge through a connection to the Tla’amin territory. One woman recounted, “every summer, I was on the boat and gone, I was away and visiting in Grace Harbor, Theodosia, Okeover, Harwood Island, Ragged Island, Okeover, Scuttle Bay, and little bays where we used to anchor out and sleep. Sometimes I’d wake up and there’s snow on top of me, my granny used to throw a canvas on me, it snowed that night. Be in the boat, just tip it over. Just living on the boat mostly.”<sup>62</sup> Another Elder had a similar experience with his grandmother, where she taught him the stories of Tla’amin not within the house but in the context of travelling in the boat:

what I remember of my grandmother, I used to like to go and stay with her in her old sailboat, not that kind of boat but I used to go sleep with them there and she would tell us stories, I don’t know any of them but I don’t remember any of them fluently enough, the stories of Mink and all that, when he married Salal, I knew it always had a meaning to it and ended with a teaching, you know about being greedy.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Play is another recognized form of Indigenous education, for the Tla’amin and Indigenous peoples generally. See Elsie Paul in collaboration with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson, *Written as I Remember It: Teachings (ʔams taʔaw) from the Life of a Sliammon Elder* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 93, and J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 21–25.

<sup>62</sup> Emily August, 11. Another Elder described sleeping on a boat with his Grandma as well, probably in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

<sup>63</sup> Eugene Louie, interview with Linda Louie, by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, October 13, 1998, MIS.57.58.59 Audiocassette 57, 58, and 59. MIS.57.58.59.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 11.

In these recollections, Tla'amin in the 1950s and 1960s relied more heavily on their territorialized environments to transmit the knowledge and values that were no longer shared in the house. Grandparents were instrumental in ensuring that children experienced their territory thoroughly and likely also the stories that impressed upon them cultural and environmental knowledge.



Figure 3.1. Fieldschool Students Learning from Elders, 2013<sup>64</sup>

Elders saw territorialized learning as a survival imperative. As a young boy in the early 1950s, another Elder remembered, “I can recollect as a young boy going with my great-grandfather to all of these locations for different resources that were provided in that are where there was the sea food, the fruits, the fish and all of those things had

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<sup>64</sup> “Fieldschool students learning from Elders, 2013, Peter August, Melvin Mitchell, Colin Osmond, Isabelle Maurice, Teresa Baker, Carrie Helter, Adrienne Marino,” photo, Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, June 13, 2013.

different purposes for the different homes we had throughout the coast.”<sup>65</sup> Another Elder who was a young boy in the early 1950s described this learning similarly as an imperative:

We were just taught you have to come to do this. You have to, they showed you how to cut the fish, they show you how to go fishing, they showed you how to hunt, you gotta be quiet. ... baths before we go hunting because, I don't know what's the value. Those were just passed like an oral thing. ... They taught you what kind of berries to pick up, and what you do with those little things that stuck to the rock on the cone. They used that for boils. ... see that rock over there, you dig your clams around that rock. ... see where the tide is really running ... that's where the salmon are, or the fish, everything was taught like that, as you were growing up.<sup>66</sup>

Although other teaching in the house had become limited spatially, Tla'amin continued to pass on important environmental and survival knowledge. As far as stories and other cultural information was available, perhaps in a response to the segregation of the house, Tla'amin emphasized teaching outside, where spaces more accurately reflected their desire for an experiential, relationship-oriented education.

Place-based and immersive, experiential education is a recognized Indigenous approach that nations as far away as the Mi'kmaq of the east coast of North America also practiced. Indigenous education scholar Marie Battiste describes this type of learning:

communal participation, observation, pragmatic and experiential learning, both formal and informal, and ... highly dependent on ... kinaesthetic, and spatial learning, as expressed in oral language and active engagement in the daily life of the people. Cyclical and patterned knowledge from living with nature reinforced in ceremony, tradition, and teachings are important referent points for the knowledge holders. The languages and oral traditions have necessarily been socialized within these priorities and ways of knowing, and thus embed many teachings, stories, traditions, and foundations that reflect these understandings and are vital to the continued connectivity of knowledges from past to future.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> P5, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 28, 2011, transcript, 2.

<sup>66</sup> P9, 11.

<sup>67</sup> Battiste, *Decolonizing Education*, and others such as the Innu of Labrador: Elizabeth Penashue, “I Really Believe in the Land and I Care about my People,” in *In the Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*, ed. Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 201. Scholar Jeff Oliver additionally discusses landscape, oral tradition, identity, history, and

Through this “survival” education, Tla’amin youth were able to receive important cultural knowledge despite pressure from Church authorities and without the stability of a site within the house for specific intergenerational knowledge sharing.

#### *More Environmental Education: Spiritual Training*

Another experiential and environment-based teaching method Tla’amin used for their children and youth was also spiritual in nature, meant to develop the appropriate Tla’amin character. It was not easy to learn. This training included early mornings and cold water in about the 1920s to 1940s:

it was winter time and we were still there, my grandfather used to come over, he used to carry a stick, he would hit the door and say, time to get up, we are going to go swimming in the river. We would hurry and get up, my mother was already cleaning fish outside. My mother would come with us, we went to the river to bathe, it was cold. If you don’t get up in the morning you will be a weak person. You feel tired, you feel lazy, all you want to do is lie down and do nothing. They used to wake you up early in the morning and they would put you to work right away. They wouldn’t feed you right away either, if you eat right away, you get lazy. It was a long time before they would feed you, after you finished your work outside. Then you can eat and you eat very little, not lots. When you get into your teens, you eat very little, if you follow the right way. They would give you very little, small pieces of bread, small bowl of soup, that’s all ’til the next time. If you eat lots right away when you enter your teens, you are really greedy, you will be big and fat, you are going to be really lazy if you are fat. They used to say all those things to us. They used to put us on the canoe and we used to go food gathering, we would paddle all day, if you don’t do this in your teens you are considered lazy, they say it is true, you have to follow the rules, the Indian way.<sup>68</sup>

Here children and teenagers were taught by both their grandfather and their mother, and the rules that they followed in regard to sleep, work, bathing, and food were imbued with specific value systems. There was a positive reason why children should not eat too much, to train young Tla’amin people to put others’ needs before their own, and to work

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meaning in *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 28.

<sup>68</sup> Mary George interview by Connie Wilson and Karen Galligos, August 4, 1998, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS.52.53.54 Audiocassette 52, 53, and 54, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC.

hard to obtain a livelihood for themselves and others. Furthermore, this training was tied to the river, to a body of cold water that children entered shortly after waking, in ways to prepare them for the difficult day and lessons to come. The cold water experience reinforced the teachings and values that were taught alongside the grueling physical experience.

An Elder speaking of the early twentieth century describes the spiritual challenges of the Tla'amin as akin to university,<sup>69</sup> and demonstrates how rigorous Tla'amin education was for specialists such as shamans:

Well, there's another way of doing it, to get yourself to be a real man, the highest, something like a College or University, whatever, and the Indians have a way of doing this but it is the harder way. If you have a home, you have to leave it and go into the lakes, real big lake. The Indians go up there, leaves his home with nothing, with nothing to eat, only his bow and arrow to kill a deer or whatever animal they want to eat and you swim all day long, getting the cedar branch, hemlock branches and you rub yourself with that cedar brushes and you dive. Be sure to keep your brushes right in line, like this, close together, all around the lake. If it is not year round yet and you finished one, you move to another one, do the same thing till it is year around. It's got to be a year around to stay up there all by yourself, then you come to be a real man, come to be a Indian doctor, you can cure anything, like consumption, TB, any kind of sickness, you can cure a man, he doesn't have to wait for three or four days when you get through with him. If he can't walk or he's dying, you can save him, he'll walk out of your house just like if he wasn't sick, that's a real true Indian doctor. Then after your swimming, that's how you get your strength, something like thunderbird, they get that too, and they get the stars too, the seven stars up there, we had a name for it but I don't know it in English. A man can get that star for strength too, a power, what it should be, something like the thunderbird. That is a really true Indian doctor, real strong. If they use it a different way they can kill you, using some kind of eagle's feathers, those big ones, they make that alive, it's just like a bullet, it shoots right into you, nobody can see it, only Indian doctors can take that thing out and you'll get better. It can make you real sick, you can die from it too, make that thing alive, it goes right into you. That's what you get if you swim all year around, just by yourself, over the lakes, year round.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Many authors acknowledge that this type of spiritual training was especially rigorous for those with specialized skills, such as a shaman, including Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 2001), 236, and J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 21–25.

<sup>70</sup> Ambrose Wilson interview by Paul Kroeber, August 26, 1979, trans. Connie Wilson, OTH.25 Audiocassette OTH 25 OTH.25.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 18–19.

Spiritual challenges were seen as an opportunity to become educated in the Tla'amin way, to prepare oneself for duties in caring for the community. In addition, he mentions that the “student” must “leave his home,” and in that time he becomes educated. Therefore, the home in this instance is seen as limiting an individual's access to education, while the Tla'amin environmental territory is empowering. It was through their connection with the water, the cedar and hemlock, and the animals that a Tla'amin learner found true power as a human being, if it was sought.

In Tla'amin in the early 1930s, many Tla'amin parents mediated a different kind of learning about spirituality that had found its way into the Tla'amin house over the past five decades: “That is one thing I feel so bad about, when I was about eight, my mom taught me how to say the ‘Our Father’ and the ‘Hail Mary,’ it just went away on me because we started using Catholic. My mom used to pray all the time, before we go to bed, when we get up in the morning, make sure we pray as soon as we get out of bed.”<sup>71</sup> This woman remembers a clear break in her own personal timeline, in connection to her belief system, in the early 1930s. This break also seems to coincide with a potential difference between her grandparents and parents and the values they hoped to transmit. What she came to believe, as an adult, between 1940 and at least 2000, is that both Tla'amin beliefs and Christian religion exist side by side, unparadoxically:

Yeah, they say it is really true, that is why you have to respect that, and like if you hear something in the house, if you are alone and something moves or your door opens and shuts, you take your rosary right away and pray, just like if you were talking to him, ask why we are doing this, if you could only tell me what you want, then you say a long prayer then it is all up to you to think whatever he wants or what he is telling you, news or whatever, good or bad, then you make up your mind to burn a plate for whoever you think it was and you can do a whole bunch of fried bread in another little box.<sup>72</sup>

In this passage, the centrality of Christian prayer is combined with the Tla'amin practice of burning, both taking place within the house. Tla'amin and Christian beliefs both had

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<sup>71</sup> McGee, 51.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 53.

space within the Tla'amin house in the early to mid-twentieth century; however, Tla'amin spiritual education continued to be embedded in Tla'amin territory. In contrast, in 2014 Paul metaphorically describes the Church: the “whole structured teachin’ with the church. ... I don’t know if it’s an armour or a wall! A solid, concrete wall.”<sup>73</sup> The directives from Church representatives to “modernize” Tla'amin housing, in the late nineteenth century had more impact than a simple change in aesthetics, and not only challenged the symbolic nature of the home but were a direct challenge to Tla'amin education, Indigenous knowledge, and teaching.



Figure 3.2. Cedar “Nurse Tree” with New Cedar Growth Inside<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 395.

<sup>74</sup> “Cedar – Phoenix Rising,” photo, Citizen Journalist, from Powell River Daily News blog entry, September 10, 2015, accessed August 10, 2015, <https://powellriverdailynews.com/2015/09/10/the-cedar-phoenix-rises/>.



*Bringing the Environment into the House: The Symbolic Use of Cedar*

The values Tla'amin children were taught via ceremonies, such as bathing, involved specific locations where children interacted with aspects of their environment, especially cedar: "They used to bring us up to XeX'neq (Owl's Grove), long time ago, we were just kids, my brother and sister, get us all together and bring us there, wash our faces with hemlock, cedar, you face the sun."<sup>75</sup> Cedar was then used for a variety of ceremonial purposes for both girls and boys. One Elder recalled, "Fast fishing or doing something, picking berries, making baskets, doing something. You will be fast in everything you do, you won't be slow. ... You sweep your feet so you can walk fast, walk straight, strong feet, bottom of your feet."<sup>76</sup> Respect and reverence for cedar resonated historically amongst other Coast Salish peoples. Anthropologists have demonstrated "a pervasive animist relationship with the ... cedar. ... The use of cedar trees for wood and bark ... required a certain respect ... canoe makers would fast and pray in preparation for locating a suitable tree, to which they would offer gifts before felling."<sup>77</sup> Throughout the day, Tla'amin connection to cedar could be seen in most of their activities including waking, eating, running, and travelling.

Cedar was so respected that it was an important symbol within the home, and retained this role, and served as a reminder of its importance, for Tla'amin throughout the twentieth century. In an interview in 1998, a Tla'amin Elder advised, "You can put that on your window or the side of your outside door over there and you will never be bothered again."<sup>78</sup> A Tla'amin person could also "set one [cedar bough] on your table or your bedside [if] your house is spooked and you are hearing things, feeling things, something wrong in your house."<sup>79</sup> The power of the cedar, a part of the outside

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<sup>75</sup> Katherine Blaney, interviewed with Henry Bob, Charlie and Mona Timothy, by Kerri Timothy, May 17, 1996, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS 21.22.doc Audiocassette MIS 21 and 23. MIS20.B.21.22.23.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 80.

<sup>76</sup> Blaney, 81.

<sup>77</sup> Jeff Oliver, *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 33.

<sup>78</sup> McGee, 30.

<sup>79</sup> George, 12.



environment, was enough to protect individuals within their homes. However, even if the home itself was made of cedar, the symbolic visual of a bough of cedar was necessary to bring this importance visually to the fore for the Tla'amin. Anthropologist Crisca Bierwert explicated the longstanding relationship between Coast Salish people, their homes, and cedar: "long ago, people swept the packed-earth floors of their houses with long cedar branches, and today people still use them to add protection at the apertures of their homes. For clarity of mind and heart, a brushing with cedar takes away the anguish of hurtful actions, or of loss, and lifts the anxieties of an uncertain future."<sup>80</sup>

In the past century and a half, cedar has held a venerated, respected role in connecting Coast Salish people like the Tla'amin to their own identity, the environment, and other relationships with non-human beings, including the cedar itself. Seneca historian and scholar Twyla Hurd suggests that the cedar itself may be part of an Indigenous education:

because everything we look at is teaching a lesson; a tree is teaching a lesson; grass is teaching a lesson, everything is teaching a lesson. We need to recognize that we are able to grasp that lesson if it is brought to us in an interesting way. When we can feel comfort we are part of its whole.<sup>81</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, the use of cedar in the Tla'amin house reminded many Tla'amin of the role of their territory in their personal growth and development, and the value system of their ancestors. The cedar is a symbol of the territorialized spaces outside of the Tla'amin house, bringing its own embodied education to the Tla'amin throughout the twentieth century. Tla'amin people also connected their homes to cedar in a similar way to how they connected their bodies to cedar through early morning bathing, although not as systematically. One Elder reported, "You do it once for your house, but for yourself you do it every morning."<sup>82</sup> The use and display of the cedar tied Tla'amin

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<sup>80</sup> Crisca Bierwert, forward to *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999).

<sup>81</sup> Twyla Hurd Nitsch, "My Heritage Was So Ingrained in Me that I Knew I Would Never Lose It," in *In the Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*, ed. Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 87.

<sup>82</sup> McGee, 64.

cultural tradition directly to the teaching and learning practiced by their ancestors, at least decades before.

*Staying Put: Limited Knowledge Transfer for Children in the 1950s and 1960s*

By the 1950s and 1960s there were fewer opportunities for Indigenous knowledge transmission, at the same time as settlement was increasing, and some families only left Sliammon for berry picking or soccer tournaments.<sup>83</sup> The children who grew up in these households learnt their Tla'amin language not only from their parents but from their grandparents, uncle, and aunts. The only stories that one participant recalled from her relationship with her grandparents was a short story related to the transformation of animals between land and ocean.<sup>84</sup> She did recall, however, that her Uncle “used to go swimming every morning, even if it was snowing. Every morning, never fails, he’d have a towel on his back, he’d be going to the river. He’d walk by your guy’s house, every morning he used to go.”<sup>85</sup> While these young people benefitted from some knowledge transmitted from their own Elders, they did not necessarily have access to the same training and education as others in their community had, or as their parents may have had.

Another Elder who was a child in the 1950s described a similar scenario. Although he was able to watch and learn from his grandfather, particularly when they spent the summer in their territory, generally, he was unable to continue this practice in a dedicated way:

I remember living in the summertime with my grandparents because my Mom and Dad would go fishing. They would take my two brothers with them so my sister and I would stay with my Grandmother and my cousin[s] ... were all there. All summer, we’d get up in the morning with the old man, old Grandpa, and he would go wash his face outside. And he did this little ritual. You know, blow the water out of his face towards the sun and ask the Creator for his health or something like

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<sup>83</sup> Margaret Timothy and Randy Timothy interview by Evan Adams, trans. Karen Galligos, May 29, 1996, MIS.28 Audiocassette MIS 28. MIS.28.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 9–10.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 16.

that. Mom used to do that too. ... Used to see it. [Asked if he himself does it] Not really. I'll still pray, somewhere, when I'm down or somewhere.<sup>86</sup>

Children had increasingly segregated households; family dwellings were no longer for multiple families, and children had more limited access to their Elder relatives. Nevertheless, these relatives continued their embedded education, attempting to share it with young people.

For others, instead of a Tla'amin education, life was complicated by family dysfunction, and the regular learning that could have been shared was not passed on. The site of this dysfunction was the house, and consequently Tla'amin territory, or spaces outdoors within the "reserve," became the safe spaces. One person who was young in the 1950s and 1960s recalled, "I used to like to go around the reserve. I wasn't allowed to leave the house so the only time I was allowed out was when they drank. ... By the time they sobered up I would be locked up in the house again."<sup>87</sup> The new house, with its bedrooms and locked doors, was a hindrance to earlier forms of Tla'amin sharing, including education.

### *Conclusion*

Tla'amin children did not necessarily "lose" their educational systems. Rather, through the challenges of colonialism, particularly spatial challenges, Tla'amin adapted their strengths to a new situation. These challenges were real, though, and both children and Elders took advantage of segregated space to avoid one another under certain circumstances. When the Tla'amin house became a space without shared areas for multi-generational educational practices, parents and elder family members ensured that they created opportunities, times, and spaces to continue to education children. Sometimes this meant creating opportunities for youth to hear from their Elders. Other families sent at

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<sup>86</sup> Philip George, interview, DVD Oral Histories Sliammon Resident Philip George ACC # 2010.85 Philip George 10-12-1 OBI.ID # 2010.85.1, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives Association, Powell River, BC.

<sup>87</sup> Rosanna Timothy interview by Brandon Peters, August 11, 2011, DVD Oral Histories Sliammon Residents Rose Timothy, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives Association, Powell River, BC.

least one child to live with their grandparents, ensuring intergenerational knowledge transmission for their family. As the house became increasingly segregated, restricting opportunities for open and inclusive teaching between the generations, Tla'amin Elders continued to teach through symbols, the types of stories that were told, and, later, through the cedar, and taught within their environmental territory, sharing the experience of embedded learning with future Tla'amin. They strove to keep these values and experiences as integral aspects of Tla'amin identity. Many Tla'amin continue these practices well into the twenty-first century.

One Tla'amin woman ensured her children received their spiritual and cultural training until the end of our time period (approximately the 1960s):

Got to the age of six. I started to go to the river, to bathe and use cedar boughs, so that I can do things easy ... you will be strong. ... used to brush me with cedar, my grandmother and grandfather, used to take us to the river and brush us ... all of us my brothers and sisters. ... when my kids were growing up I was doing that to them brushing them.<sup>88</sup>

Despite the challenges posed by colonized architecture, Tla'amin sought ways to ensure that their Indigenous education system continued alongside spatial and religious changes in children's lives. Although these lessons reflected earlier systems of education, these efforts were not done easily or without challenge. Furthermore, individuals and communities are complicated, and these changes occurred differently amongst families and individuals, over longer or shorter time periods. Knowing how to be "properly" Coast Salish is attached to Coast Salish status,<sup>89</sup> and the continuation of cultural knowledge amongst some families would certainly have given them claims to this esteemed position within the community. While the goal of colonization was to assimilate Indigenous people through the eradication of Indigeneity, its challenges to

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<sup>88</sup> Mary George, interview by John Davies, 1207212\_00039 4.52.36 PM.pdf, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC.

<sup>89</sup> Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987), 8, see also Bruce G. Miller, *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 8, 225.

their education system actually reinforced the many ways that Tla'amin remain Indigenous today.

Bierwert makes an impassioned claim that changing spaces, altering the environment for the development of industry, will put Indigenous “ways of knowing at risk. ... embodied knowledge is lost and what now mobilizes fishing people on the river is altered as well.”<sup>90</sup> This fear of lost embodied knowledge could apply to changes in the Tla'amin house as well. However, the Tla'amin people used a number of strategies that recalled earlier embodied teaching in their environment, including their house and territory, throughout the twentieth century.<sup>91</sup> As Raibmon suggests, Elders who taught Paul, and Paul herself, “taught that *ḡams taḡaw* are not a set of abstract ideas but principles for living that should be practiced and passed on.”<sup>92</sup> These are of course different for each generation of Tla'amin. For example, while Paul's imperative themes to share are “self-care, respect, healing, and spirituality,”<sup>93</sup> many earlier generations of teachers would emphasize intimate knowledge of hunting, fishing, gathering, and medicinal plants.

Paul and Raibmon acknowledge this shifting emphasis of education: “practices can and will change over time; the teachings are constant. Chi-chia thus suggests that what is enduring about tradition or culture is not necessarily located in the physical practices where many may expect to find it, or in the texts and artifacts long collected by salvage anthropologists.”<sup>94</sup> Instead, these teachings were to be found within Tla'amin Elders and their territories; where once these lessons dominated the whole house, later Tla'amin found safer, but less accessible, spaces where they could practice and protect

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<sup>90</sup> Bierwert, *Brushed by Cedar*, 281.

<sup>91</sup> Vince Stogan, “When I Came Home My Elders Taught Us That All Our People Who Have Passed on Are Still with Us,” in *The Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*, ed. Peter Kulchyski, Don McCaskill, and David Newhouse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 449. Musqueam Elder Vince Stogan described how in his community “an Elder would come around and get all the young people out of bed in the morning and get them to the river to swim. This went on for a long time, but then the river got polluted and we could not swim in the water anymore. They have to go swim in the mountains where there are fresh streams.” For Stogan, this is connected to “exercise” but could also have been an opportunity for experiential education under the direction of an Elder.

<sup>92</sup> Paul, *Teachings*, 13.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 42.

their knowledge. This use of environmental territory as a strategy to ensure the transmission of Indigenous knowledge continued even when young Tla'amin people were sent to day, and then residential, schools.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Finding Spaces for Tla'amin Teachings: The Challenges of Residential School**

In the nineteenth century, Tla'amin teenagers underwent rigorous and gendered education and training. In the twentieth century, the ability to transmit knowledge across generations at this pivotal age was increasingly challenged not only by the physical changes in Tla'amin houses but also by the physical removal of young people to day schools and, later, residential schools. The Tla'amin people employed strategies like those used for childhood education to continue to provide adolescents with important educational opportunities, while residential schools challenged these efforts by removing the Tla'amin youth from their houses, their Elders, and their territories. Nevertheless, Tla'amin people employed key strategies, like the use of environmental territorial spaces, to ensure the continuation of key Indigenous knowledge within Tla'amin youth.

Elders played a key role in educational training. Special places were essential for that training. For example, food gathering or ritual bathing could only occur at certain times and at certain locations. During the course of the twentieth century, Tla'amin homes grew to resemble Euro-Canadian homes. The segregation of family members and activities into separate rooms challenged the opportunities for and expectation of intergenerational sharing. Parents and Elders had to make concerted efforts to use space, particularly outside the home, more purposefully to share Indigenous Tla'amin knowledge. For Tla'amin youth, ceremonies that marked their transition from childhood into adulthood were similarly spatially dependent, and these rituals were also challenged by changes in housing throughout the twentieth century. Part of this change was as a result of schooling that removed children and youth from their families and territories. These changes had a particularly great impact on the training of Tla'amin young women,

whose coming-of-age time was once tied intimately to seclusion within small compartments that were set up within the longhouse. To maintain knowledge transmission in this situation, many Tla'amin families increasingly relied on symbolism within their changed homes, emphasized those ceremonies that remained accessible, and relied more heavily on their territories, and not their homes, to provide the education that helped create Tla'amin identity and culture.

*Young Women's Training: Secluded in the Longhouse in the Nineteenth Century, Free in the Twentieth*

Elders who shared their knowledge with anthropologist and linguist Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard described a young woman's puberty rite, involving seclusion "in a cubicle above the family's sleeping compartment"<sup>1</sup> in the longhouse. According to male informants who worked with anthropologist Homer Barnett, such seclusion lasted between four and sixteen days, "in one section of the bed platform in her home. Curtains or partitions were put around her and she was allowed to see no one but her attendant."<sup>2</sup> In this space, a young woman was fed very little and was not allowed to touch any other property. In addition, she had to keep her eyes on the ground and was only allowed to move from her spot above the family's sleeping compartment in public to go to the toilet. Her eating, sleeping, and talking were all restricted. Lastly, she was required to bathe every morning, and to wear red cedar on her wrists and ankles.<sup>3</sup> Kennedy and Bouchard's research refers to an ethnographic past that predates the research from the Sliammon oral history databases by at least fifty if not almost one hundred years. Barnett would have been able to access informants who had lived throughout the nineteenth century and whose ancestors had lived even earlier. Although there were major changes in the practices of women's puberty rites and training, many of the main tenets remained well

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard, *Sliammon Life, Sliammon Lands* (Vancouver: Talon Books, 1983), 51.

<sup>2</sup> Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1955), 150 (this is general for the Coast Salish).

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy and Bouchard. *Sliammon Life*, 51.



into the twentieth century. Seclusion, bathing, and some form of restriction, as well as the use of cedar, continued to be practiced until at least the early 1950s.

Changing house spaces dramatically altered young women's training. For example, in more recent oral histories, this training does not include seclusion in any way. A very practical reason for this modification is that housing changes from the open longhouse, with partially separated compartments for families, to the nuclear family dwelling unit, with multiple segregated, specific-use spaces, had so radically altered the home that there was less physical need for a separate, designated space for seclusion. On the other hand, many of the small, overcrowded houses used throughout much of the twentieth century did not have space where the young woman could be tucked away for seclusion from nuclear family members. When Tla'amin homes changed from multi-family to single-family dwellings, there were fewer people in the house from which to seclude the daughter. This suggests several things. First of all, that the space in these new houses reinforced the nuclear family unit over that of the extended family. More directly, the new home environment enforced the idea that a woman's "place" was entrenched within her nuclear family, and less control or restriction was placed upon women in regard to their extended family or community. For example, an Elder surmised, "to be secluded, I guess, it was mostly for respect and confidentiality and all that."<sup>4</sup> Thus seclusion from the rest of the community, and not from the nuclear family, could have been what mattered most in the earlier practice, and the later nuclear family household simply reinforced that expectation. It would appear, then, that throughout the nineteenth century changes in architecture dramatically affected women's role in the Tla'amin community. Women may have had more personal autonomy and freedom in the community as the twentieth century wore on, through the ability of the nuclear family to control their space during puberty.

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<sup>4</sup> P9, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 3, 2015, transcript, 15.

Young men also underwent special treatment during puberty, “when their voices change,”<sup>5</sup> throughout the nineteenth century, but this was tied more to spaces outside the house, and even the village. Usually fathers or grandfathers trained sons. Barnett describes in detail the use of cedar or wool ties placed around the young men’s joints, which they wore in “the woods for intensive and prolonged training.”<sup>6</sup> This training period lasted a year, and included sweating four times a day during time in the woods, as well as ceremonial bathing. Barnett suggests that amongst the Tla’amin, young men and women did not have vastly different treatment during these rites. However, the fact that women were kept inside the longhouse at one time, and that men’s space of seclusion was outside, meant that women’s rites, more than those of men, changed considerably during the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century.

*Training Young Men: Different Spaces, Different Meanings, Different Gender Roles*

The length, location, and purpose of seclusion differed between young men and women. Seclusion location determined much of its purpose, and the purpose demanded specific locations. Barnett reports that young men were concerned with finding their own spiritual powers. These spiritual powers were most often related to the environment, including water and animal spirits. Young women were taught expectations around their own menstruation with regards to others, the proper way for a Tla’amin woman to behave, and how to seek their own, “weaker” spirit powers.<sup>7</sup> This description of women’s knowledge is almost all relational and requires the appropriate control of the young woman’s interactions with the rest of her family and community, and relies considerably less than the men’s training on the environment to help her find her place. According to Barnett’s informants, a young girl’s rite was primarily in relation to her marriageability.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Katherine Blaney, Henry Bob, Charlie and Mona Timothy, interview by Kerri Timothy, May 17, 1996, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS 21.22.doc. Audiocassette MIS 21 and 23. MIS20.B.21.22.23.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 81.

<sup>6</sup> Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 168.

<sup>7</sup> Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 150.

<sup>8</sup> Barnett’s source bias is evident in the length of his descriptions of girls’ versus boys’ puberty rite expectations. For the general Coast Salish, he shares eight pages on the occurrences and expectations of a young man’s experience, and just three on a young woman’s.

A young Tla'amin man's coming-of-age education may not have changed as drastically as a young woman's as a result of changes to housing because the spaces in which seclusion took place were not as drastically altered. Barnett writes, "there were certain lakes where boys sought powers, but no particular spirits were associated with specific spots."<sup>9</sup> From the mid-nineteenth century to approximately the mid-twentieth century,<sup>10</sup> the vision quest continued as a ritual to help a young boy become a man: "And that's really how men became men and those that wanted to become to gain [*sic*] some kind of power. He gets his power."<sup>11</sup> Instead of taking place within the family house, the ceremony centred on the time the young man spent walking around the lake, and washing in it with the aid of the water and cedar branches. The man's power would "surface from the lake"<sup>12</sup> or in his dreams, then he must go towards it, rather than shrink from it, to gain its strength. The power was spiritual, medicinal, or for hunting.<sup>13</sup> The ceremony was decidedly situated within the context of the lake: a lake provided the space for finding power; it was away from the home and the village, where the young man was separate from other human beings and had to embrace his experience within that context in order to gain his power. A young Tla'amin man found himself, through this ceremony, prepared for his life within his environment, without the confines and comforts of home. "Natural forces" helped define a Tla'amin man's character, as opposed to the much more human-constructed forces of the house. These "house" forces include, in addition to its structured walls, the company and relationships of family members.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Barnett, *Coast Salish*, 168.

<sup>10</sup> Elsie Paul, interview with Katherine Blaney, Nora Wilson, Joe Mitchell (Hewkin), Henry Bob, and Maggie Vivier, by Maynard Harry, January 10, 1996, trans. Arlene Harry and Marion Harry, MIS.2B.doc Audiocassette MIS 2B, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 3. Elsie Paul asserts that this was "Before the white people came and it carried on even after the white people came in the late 1700's. That's when the white people came in 1700's. Because my grandmother remembers, you know an uncle and her dad doing these kinds of things. First hand information that these people did that."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Heaver Joseph, interview with Theresa Wilson, by Connie Wilson and Karen Galligos, May 24, 1996, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS.25.26 Audiocassette MIS 25 and 26. MIS.25.26.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 14. "The Indian people call it 'T'eet' keh nom,' when your voice changes."

An Elder who was likely born in the last decades of the nineteenth century described his own training as a young man. His mother took him away from the settlement, and the practice was defined by his relationship with the water, tree, and air, in addition to what his mother said to him:

Yes, when he was a little kid too, it's not a little kid but if a boy changes his voice, I got that but I never became a Indian doctor. Mom used to take me up when I changes my voice, and used to get me up early in the morning, just breaking daylight, take me way up the creek, I used to walk 100–150 yards, way up. It has to be clean where you go. ...

... Where people don't even go, that's the place they take you and you make a pool and it's deep, maybe 2 ½ feet deep. When you get there, they tell you to dive, come up and the tree brushes and after that, when you get through, then she takes over, she tells you to sit down, water would be up here hey, sitting down and she grabs my head and puts me under water, which I couldn't hardly hear, it's hard to hear when you are under water. I didn't even know what she was talking about, but I could hear her talking, I was crazy not to ask what she was saying, I stayed down about a minute, then lift my head up again, just to give me air, she did that about three times, then I am finished.<sup>15</sup>

The presence of this man's mother is a clear departure from earlier discussions on young men's training, and later in the interview the Elder explains that his mother was standing in for his father, who was sickly at the time. The role adopted by his mother in this case is to mediate his growing relationship with his own abilities. His mother seems to be praying for him, and it is she who decides when he is able to take his breath. In some ways, she is recreating his very birth in order to bring him power as a man. While his mother was not the intended participant, having female family members take on this role was not uncommon, as another man described, in the late 1940s: "My grandmother used to take me to the river to bathe me every day. That is why I am so healthy today."<sup>16</sup> Thus, despite the fact that this ceremony is part of a package of experiences he must participate

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<sup>15</sup> Ambrose Wilson, interview by Dorothy Kennedy, December 19, 1977, trans. Connie Wilson, Karen Galligos, Mary George, Agnes McGee, Elsie Paul, Katherine Blaney, and Peggy Harry, OTH.21 Audiocassette OTH 21 OTH.21.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 21.

<sup>16</sup> P4, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, March 8, 2011, transcript, 1.

in to progress as a Tla'amin person, a young man's mother was a key component of his ability to progress to adulthood.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, spatial location was important. The learner had to be in a "clean" place, "where peoples don't even go" and this was only "100–150 yards" away from his house. This indicates, again, that away from the village was a sacred place for Tla'amin people. Through his interaction with the water and "tree brushes," a symbolic and physically enacted rebirth occurred, in this case amplified by the presence of his mother. The man had to use his own commitment and endurance to prove his place amongst other beings, including the natural world, tying him symbolically and culturally through this ceremony to his ancestors and successors.<sup>18</sup>

It would appear that his mother's participation was a departure from the standard nineteenth-century practice as described by Barnett. It is possible that Barnett was unaware of women's involvement in men's ceremonies. Furthermore, if the involvement of women in young men's ceremonies was a twentieth-century innovation for Tla'amin boys, a change in their respective roles is also a possibility. It may have been easier for women to undertake the training of young men in the climate of early-twentieth-century repression by both the government and Church, or women may have been more available to do so while Tla'amin men were engaged in wage labour elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> In several interviews from the twentieth century, it was a young man's father, grandfather, or friend who took him to bathe, in addition to Tla'amin mothers and grandmothers.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Wilson, 23.

<sup>18</sup> P4, 1, and Charlie Bob, interview by Brandon Peters, August 8, 2011, Powell River Museum Video Interview, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, Powell River, BC. Grandmothers mediated this relationship for at least two other young Tla'amin men.

<sup>19</sup> Charlie Bob, interview by Brandon Peters, August 8, 2011, Powell River Museum Video Interview, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, Powell River, BC. For example, Charlie Bob was raised by his grandmother (born in 1941) because he lost his own mother as a baby.

<sup>20</sup> P4, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 1, 2015, transcript, 2, was taken to bathe by his Grandmother as a child in the late 1930s or early 1940s. P11, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 5, 2015, transcript, 12, went with a friend's grandfather to do bathing in the mid-1950s. P6, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 1, was taken to bathe by his mother in the 1950s. P9, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 26, 2011, transcript, 9, shared responsibilities with his mother for his own children and grandchildren to do ceremonial bathing of both genders, probably in the 1970s. P8, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 13, was taken by his Grandfather to ceremonially bathe in the 1970s.

An overall shift to a less gender-specific approach to coming of age may have been underway at the same time. For example, throughout the time period, an emphasis on spiritual bathing for both young men and young women is apparent. This ceremony remained accessible in lakes and rivers, and other bodies of water, unlike the previous seclusion of girls indoors. As it was a practice that could easily be tied to cleanliness over spirituality, colonial authorities of Church and State overlooked it. One Tla'amin man explained how the practice's link to gender may have changed throughout successive generations:

Years and years go, they did that, to become a man. Girls, I don't know. Men, I knew. They were sent somewhere. He had to show off his manhood and all that to support his family, that he wasn't a lazy person. That's the old days, you bring home the bacon. ... My Dad's generation ... their grandparents, his teachings were different. He had to do it, go out, get in the bath, whip yourself, get your berries, get your clams, things that you had to do. It was fishing season, do it, clam digging season, do it. Plums, were around, you had to do it, put it away for later months, but that's what they're taught. Each generation, different. What the priest or nuns taught you changed it.<sup>21</sup>

Tla'amin teaching over the course of these described generations shifted from reinforcing a specific gender role, to "show off his manhood" and demonstrate to the community his use, "that he wasn't a lazy person," to ensuring appropriate food gathering practices. This Elder acknowledges the teaching's change over time, but also that the "priest or nuns" intervened to change what they may have been. One Tla'amin man who came of age in the late 1950s felt that he had undergone no particular ceremonies. He said, "I don't remember very much of it. We didn't have any ceremonies, or with the men, I don't know about the women did. Because we probably had lost everything by the time I was grown up, all the old-style rituals."<sup>22</sup> Tla'amin people in the twentieth century acknowledged that, although ceremonies existed for them to come of age in the past, the passage of time and colonial intervention challenged their awareness of how these ceremonies actually played out.

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<sup>21</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, September 30, 2015, transcript, 14.

<sup>22</sup> P9, 15.

### *Residential Schools: A Commitment to the Future*

In the twentieth century, Euro-Canadians saw Tla'amin coming-of-age practices as intertwined with Western education systems, and removed Tla'amin children from their Elders, family members, houses and territories to enforce their own vision of what it meant to become an adult.<sup>23</sup> At first, a school was stationed in Sliammon itself, but shortly the day school gave way to a residential school outside of the area, taking some Tla'amin children with it:

And when school started, the teacher was a white person, first one, his house was over there, where Elsie Paul's house is, that is where his big house was. That was the very first teacher that came here, his wife was a nurse. And that is where they made a small school, where that house burned down, that is where that little school was, that is where the children went, and it wasn't a big school. I think it went up to grade seven or was it six. Then everybody was sent to residential school, they sent the children from here. They just took them and sent them away. There was a meeting house, the dance hall, it was behind the church. They used it as a school, I think David George went to that school. After that some went to the Catholic school, all of my children did not go to residential school, they stayed here.<sup>24</sup>

Like most colonial changes in Sliammon, the transition to residential schools was not an abrupt shift for all families. Relatively gradual changes occurred throughout the community over years and sometimes decades, through decisions made by individuals, each within their own context. This does not suggest that the experience was not transformative and highly disruptive to community health, wellness, and cultural continuity – or that it was not, simply, cultural genocide. Still, not all Tla'amin children went, and when they did, they stayed for varying lengths of time. Historian J. R. Miller describes how only approximately one third of “eligible” Indigenous Canadian children

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<sup>23</sup> J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of the Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 234. Miller addresses the distinct lack of acknowledgement of the onset of menstruation for young women at residential school as a “particular crisis.”

<sup>24</sup> Mary George, interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, August 4, 1998, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS.52.53.54 Audiocassette 52, 53, and 54. MIS.52.53.54.wpd.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 5.

were ever educated in residential schools.<sup>25</sup> Most Tla'amin families sent their children or had their children forcibly taken to residential school at various points between 1912 and 1960. Sechelt Indian Residential School, where many Tla'amin children were sent, held up to fifty students at a time and operated from 1912 to 1975.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the fact that residential and other schooling was often a negative experience for many Tla'amin people, throughout the nineteen and twentieth centuries, as a Nation the Tla'amin people were committed to the ideals of a broader education. In 1909, the Tla'amin made mobility and financial decisions based on the availability of education for their children. Regarding one request to use local timber, the Indian Agent described their educational concerns:

These Indians are taking a praiseworthy interest in the day school recently established on their reserve, and they fear that if they are compelled to leave the reserve to seek employment elsewhere, the school will suffer, as they will have to take their families with them; and one of their chief reasons for being asking to be allowed to cut and sell timber from off the reserve, is in order that they can stay in their village and make a success of the school.<sup>27</sup>

The day school operated from 1910 to 1912, taught by Mr. J. W. L. Browne, and it made “good progress” until he resigned in January of 1913.<sup>28</sup> During the 1915 Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC, Chief Tom reported to the commissioners that there was a day school on his reserve and that all the children attended it.<sup>29</sup> The day school operated until 1919.<sup>30</sup> Following the Great Fire of 1918, the

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<sup>25</sup> Miller, *Residential Schools*, 171.

<sup>26</sup> P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August, 2011, transcript, 1. Other schools may have included St. Paul's in North Vancouver, Victoria, and Kuper Island; “Sechelt Indian Residential School,” Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society, Indian Residential Schools Resources and Vancouver Foundation, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://irsr.ca/sechelt-indian-residential-school/>.

<sup>27</sup> Indian Agent McDonald Fraser Agency to A. W. Vowell, Esq. Indian Superintendent, Victoria, BC, Indian Office New Westminster, BC, June 12, 1909, Indian Affairs RG 10, Volume 7861, File 30167-24.

<sup>28</sup> Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended March 31, 1912, Ottawa, 1912 No. 27-1913, Sliammon Treaty Office Archives: Miscellaneous–Historical References folder.

<sup>29</sup> “Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC Meeting with the Sliam-mon Band or Tribe of Indians at their Sliam-mon Indian Reserve,” February 19, 1915, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, “McKenna-McBride Agency Testimonies: New Westminster Agency,” accessed April 4, 2013, <http://gsdl.ubcic.bc.ca/collect/royalcom/import/newest1.html> (access 04/26/13), 295-296.



Tla'amin worked to rebuild the Church, and children attended a school taught by Dr. Basil Nicholson.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Nicholson kept a diary from 1921 to 1922, now available in the Powell River Museum. In the diary Dr. Nicholson reports that some families left for handlogging and to make money elsewhere; others stayed, and some helped to rebuild the church, while schoolchildren went on trips to Campbell River to play sports.<sup>32</sup> He complained in his diary, "The families leaving reserve lately to earn a livelihood interferes with progress of pupils."<sup>33</sup> By the 1930s and 1940s, however, residential school was a Tla'amin reality. Elsie Paul recollected her evasion of the school:

Yes, I didn't go early like at 6 years. My grandparents would take me away at the end of August before they would come to gather the children. Once they had their quota they would leave the ones left behind. [The quota was] to the capacity of the building. But once you got beyond that, there was no opportunity to go to highschool. After grade 6 or 7.<sup>34</sup>

In Sliammon the 1920 and 1930 amendments to the Indian Act that compelled school attendance between the ages of seven and fifteen, and later extended that to sixteen, had their desired effect.<sup>35</sup> From then on, Tla'amin young people were as vulnerable as other Indigenous peoples across the country to the pernicious effects of residential schools.

By the 1950s, there were once again greater options for public schools, which at least helped keep Tla'amin children and youth closer to their territories, families, and Elders. One Elder who was a boy in the 1940s and early 1950s explained,

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<sup>30</sup> Peter Byrne, Indian Agent to Mr. Marsden, Government of the Dominion of Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, British Columbia New Westminster Agency, March 3, 1919, Indian Affairs RG-10 Volume 7862 File 30167-24A.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Byrne, Indian Agent to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, ON. January 23, 1920, New Westminster, BC, Indian Affairs RG 10 Volume 7862, File 30167-24A.

<sup>32</sup> Basil Nicholson Diary, May 20–July 1, 1921, Fond 36, Series 1 File 1. Powell River Historical Museum and Archives Association, Powell River, BC.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholson Diary, November 8, 1921.

<sup>34</sup> Elsie Paul interview by Debbie Dan and Graeme Murray, September 29, 2010, ACC # 2010.87 OBJ.ID.2010.87.1 PR Museum DVD Oral Histories Sliammon Residents Elsie Paul, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives Association, Powell River, BC.

<sup>35</sup> Miller, *Residential Schools*, 169–170.

we went to public school. There was a school in Sliammon, though in the '50s. And there was quite a bit of us going to school. They had [grades] 1–3, 4–6 in two rooms. We didn't have any ... grades. We didn't have any nuns or priests teach us, we had teachers, it was real teachers. There must have been more of us at home. ... After grade 6, I had to go to the Catholic school. It just got built and it was only one room.<sup>36</sup>

When local schooling was available, Tla'amin families did choose to send “quite a bit” of their young people there.

For economic and personal reasons, some families chose to send children away. One young man who attended residential school in the early 1940s explained, “I went to school. My Dad was a fisherman, on a sailboat. My grandparents were gone down to the US for hop picking so they sent me to the school. It was difficult.”<sup>37</sup> Other families sent their kids to residential school due to their affection for and commitment to the Church. A woman who attended in the 1940s described her mother's commitment to her Church-based education:

I guess things had been coming to a change, where education was necessary and my Mom being Catholic, she felt there was a need because English was now getting to be stronger than our dialect. Our ways were put away for a number of reasons being that the Catholic Church was very much involved with our three communities, which is Tla'amin, Klahoose and Homalco. I witnessed my mother's interest and her participating and she and a couple of other ladies would take care of the priest when he came for his visit, and have the prayers and mass for our community. My Mom was kind and generous with providing the priest with his meals, and she and her lady friends, they rotated about the linen in the Church, the altar, they rotated with the meals, cleaning of the Church, and it remained like that. ... thought it was now time because they had the greatest respect and love for the Church, that it would be good for me to go to the residential school. Which would be the whole year, to leave home and go. ...

... I remember the day, my family were sitting around the table, making decisions for me, that I was going to be going away. My Mom had talked to the parish priest that I was going to be going far away to school.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> P9, 16.

<sup>37</sup> P3, 2011, 1.

<sup>38</sup> P10, interviewed by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 2–3.



Figure 4.1. Kuper Island Industrial School<sup>39</sup>

Despite the negative intrusions residential school caused in Sliammon, the Tla'amin people were consistently dedicated to education and participating in the changes taking place outside of Sliammon. This dedication extended beyond the desire to keep children and youth at home, close to their Elders and territories. Perhaps, in some ways, this resonated with Tla'amin coming-of-age ceremonies, as youth were put in a new situation, secluded from the broader community, to learn a new way of being as a Tla'amin adult.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many Tla'amin families continued to value education, although, for others, logging was preferred to schooling. Although there were two day

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<sup>39</sup> "Kuper Island Industrial School," Image, from BC Archives. H-07256, 198904-004, June 13, 1913.

schools available, residential school was still used for economic reasons by families. One man went to the Sliammon school for a few years, and then dropped out to log at the age of twelve.<sup>40</sup> One young person in the 1950s acknowledged that residential school offered a specific kind of support. After attending Sliammon day school, he was transferred to Sechelt: “It was an economic movement, my mom couldn’t support me here. So it was easier for me to go to a boarding school and have the school look after me.”<sup>41</sup> Following this educational and financial decision, he did feel confident enough to venture to Vancouver to complete a “Native upgrading school.”<sup>42</sup> One decade later, in the 1960s, schooling was available in a variety of different communities, but Tla’amin still had a complicated relationship to formal education. One woman reported that as a young person she attempted to attend school consistently. She explained,

[For school, I went] to different places, everywhere. I went to Church House for a while till grade six. Then I moved to Vancouver with my mom and step-mom’s mom. I was going to go to school here, but I changed my mind. ... She raised for me to go to boarding school in Surrey. So I went to school in Surrey. But it went to school in Sechelt too.<sup>43</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s education was available on location in Sliammon; however, Tla’amin children continued to be sent to various other locations for education. Two Elders born in the mid- to late 1940s attended school in Sliammon, Sechelt, Mission, Powell River, and North Vancouver.<sup>44</sup>

This commitment to a broader education that reflected modern realities is apparent from Chief Tom Timothy’s time, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, until today. In 2011 an Elder born in 1948 explained, “now you need education, before it

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<sup>40</sup> Art Noel Harry, interview with Joanne Francis, by Evan Adams, June 17, 1996, MIS.32 Audiocassette MIS 32 MIS.32.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Peters, interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, September 27, 1996, trans. Karen Galligos, MIS.40.41. Audiocassette 40 and 41, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Joanne Francis, interview with Noel Art Harry, by Evan Adams, June 17, 1996, MIS.32 Audiocassette MIS 32 MIS.32.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 17.

<sup>44</sup> Linda and Eugene Louie, interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, October 13, 1998, MIS.57.58.59 Audiocassette 57, 58, and 59. MIS.57.58.59.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 4.

was wisdom. ... The young people have to go to school now, because you need education to become a leader, with the technology you have now.”<sup>45</sup> According to some people, Chief Tom Timothy was highly respected in part because of his broader experience outside Indigenous communities. When Chief Tom was finally convinced to return home from his experience on a schooner, “he ruled. And because of his knowledge of the European and all of that he was quite in tune with you know, land surveys, and all of these things.”<sup>46</sup> Chief Tom’s direct descendant believes that this commitment to the Euro-Canadian education system has helped Tla’amin people to ride out the difficulties of colonialism:

When you do an analysis of a comparison of where we are as a nation, you see the pros and cons of our nation that has lost all the traditional stuff, such as the dances, the songs, the regalia, all that. And where other nations have kept up with those traditions, because we adapted early on, I think it put us in a better position for today, and where we are at. That’s just me speaking on how I evaluate our academics in this community. ... we’re still very adaptable, you can still go back to what those principles were in the past. ...

... Higher education can provide for the future based on what we’re trying to [do]. ... and we’re still hoping somehow we can still retain our language, our culture, and all that. ...

... right now if you’re going to achieve things in life, well, you gotta adapt to what is now and what is necessary. You still have individuals in this community that wanted to live off the land, but their worldly goods are not as good as what you can provide by adapting into a system. ...

... That’s when education kicks in, in terms of the European ways to, what do we need to learn to counter this sort of situation. ... You fight them with pens, they said, which means education, using their systems. And I think we’ve done it well in this community. Taking a long time. But we’re in control of our own destiny. We’re not getting it 100% but it’s better than living under the Indian Act and federal government.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> P9, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 26, 2011, transcript, 1.

<sup>46</sup> P5, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, transcript, 11.

<sup>47</sup> P5, interview with P7, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 4, 35, 42. This speech is from someone with an enviable position who was able to share in a lot of teachings from his grandparents, and he also describes how contradictory these goals can be. He said, “The cry used to be, ‘we’ve got to get our kids educated before we change something.’ Then it started to, then our kids got education and became leaders, and it changed again and became, ‘you guys think you’re so smart,’” 10. Again, this references the intergenerational divides and cleavages that residential and other Western educational systems engendered in Sliammon.

This particular Elder sees the loss of “traditional stuff” as a concerted strategy to allow education to take place amongst the Tla’amin, which would help them “control ... [their] own destiny,” and in the future reclaim “what is necessary,” including “our language, our culture, and all that.” This vision for Tla’amin came at a high cost, but helps to explain the continued commitment of many Tla’amin families to Western education systems that took children and youth away from their Indigenous learning and coming-of-age traditions.

### *Coming of Age in a New Space: Residential Schools*

While some may have attributed benefits to attending residential schools, this change in educational environment did disrupt intergenerational power and relationships in Sliammon, several of which were in many ways tied spatially to the house, as well as where and how puberty rites took place. Importantly it disrupted the open-space relationships between youth and Elders that had occurred previously in longhouse and even open-concept shacks. In Dr. Basil Nicholson’s diary, there are several instances in November 1921 when parents complained to the schoolteacher that their efforts to rein in their children were going unnoticed. For example, one woman explained to Nicholson that instead of attending the school to which she was sent, the child she adopted “wanders around the village and vicinity.”<sup>48</sup> One week later, another adult complained to Nicholson that his child was “disputing his father’s authority in home.”<sup>49</sup> Many Tla’amin young people rejected outright the option to undertake new forms of learning even within their community, at the day school, and additionally rejected the spatialized relationships of authority within their own homes. The day schools began to undermine the hours, days, months, and years that Tla’amin people spent building up their own expertise. A completely different knowledge set could now be found in a new space under an alien, domineering set of cultural rules. This new space had a direct impact on the controlled relationship that had once existed between children, youth, and Elders in the Tla’amin longhouse. The removal of educational experiences from the home environment was

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<sup>48</sup> Nicholson Diary, November 2, 1921.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., November 9, 1921.

accompanied by a loss of respect for and obedience to one's Elders, a relationship that had previously been reinforced by the Indigenous educational system of the longhouse.

Residential schools disrupted Indigenous communities and children's concepts of space, and even remade their expectations of how to use and manipulate space for particular skills and learning. This transition remodelled family relationships physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Tla'amin children were raised in multi-family dwellings or even single-family dwellings with few to no segregated rooms, and they enjoyed embedded learning with siblings and Elders at home in centralized locations or in territorial spaces. In contrast, Miller describes the "fanatical segregation of female and male students" that applied "not only to dormitories but also to playrooms, tables in the refectory, pews in church, and even in some cases to classrooms as well,"<sup>50</sup> which kept siblings apart. Sometimes same-sex siblings were further segregated by age category.<sup>51</sup> A Tla'amin Elder remembered the social isolation this created:

Same building, but on each end, they had the boys side and a girls side. It was where we'd even get heck for waving at them on the girls' side. So we used to meet in what is called a parlor, the nun would be sitting there while we sat together for a half an hour. We couldn't speak our language, of course, we had to speak English all the time we were there. That was very difficult because you know a lot of native people are very close and that's our tradition, we help each other, we live with each other. Nobody gets kicked out when they're sixteen years old. That was our tradition; we just stayed at home, what I call the rotation. Your parents looked after you when you were small, when they got old it was your turn to look after them until they passed on, that was how our people looked after each other. When they take you away from your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, who think really highly of you, then it's very difficult to leave. You're so lonesome, boy those were difficult times.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Miller, *Residential Schools*, 219.

<sup>51</sup> Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillicum Library, 1988), 48.

<sup>52</sup> Hewkin Joe Mitchell, interview by L. Maynard Harry, September 20, 1995, trans. Arlene and Mary Harry, Jodie Cheskinukt Williams, MIS.3.doc. MIS 3 MIS.3.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 8.

Not only does he reference the emotional difficulty of separation from siblings, but also the importance of intergenerational relationships, those “who think really highly of you,” and dependence, which were challenged by this education system. This separation took away the “turn” that children and youth had to be cared for by their parents, to feel a part of their parents’ lives as they, in turn, aged and required assistance. There was a new version of seclusion for children. Instead of learning to be Tla’amin adults through their relationships to their community and family, in their own houses or in relationship to their environmental territories, Tla’amin family relationships were restricted, including those between siblings within the residential school. Church authorities took over the role of monitoring and directing relationships between children, imposing their own value system on them. Each aspect of a child’s relationship with their spatial environment and family was replaced with a “lonesome” new segregation by gender, lack of family relationships, and loss of language.

Another Elder who attended in the 1940s described how younger children reacted to the strangeness of the residential school when they arrived:

I became a mother before I was 10 years old because of my nurturing these little children that were lonely, they were sick. Just lost little ones. ...

... And they would tell, they’re lonely. Lots of tears. ... Strangeness of a big building, afraid of the nuns because they were dressed in black and white. I like to think of the good and important times when I was at the residential school. ... And you can look around, see if you find dirt, see how things are in the kitchen, the layout of my home, a lot of that was from the residential school. Learning to be organized. We all had our turn working in different places, the laundry room, the swing room, the cottage.<sup>53</sup>

In this description, she acknowledges the loneliness that the separation caused, the fear of the “big building,” and the lack of emotional comfort provided by the nuns, who were not in any way seen as family members. However, she describes how this separation created in her an appreciation for even more subdivided spaces within a home environment and the specialized skills she learnt in each of these spaces, “learning to be organized. ... in different places, the laundry room, the sewing room, the swing room, the cottage.”

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<sup>53</sup> P10, 4–5.



Miller demonstrates that residential schools reinforced hierarchical and racist curricula through school designs that separated staff quarters from students through lock and key, and through the segregation between the staff's more pleasant mealtime atmosphere with linens and silvers and the students' shared "utilitarian"<sup>54</sup> cafeteria. Education Professor Celia Haig-Brown has also written on residential school experiences and suggests that, for new residents of Kamloops Indian Residential School (and likely most others), "the final shock of the day came at bedtime. Instead of the communal beds of home, the children were directed to dormitories containing row on row of individual beds with white sheets and a single blanket."<sup>55</sup> If Tla'amin children's previous experience of solitary sleeping related to coming-of-age and spirit power, this new ceremony enforced a different kind of individualism, within the context of a foreign and largely malevolent institution. This contrasts with the personal power and cultural personhood and belonging created by the experience of sleeping in a closed-off quarter within the family home, or in the woods, as part of an acknowledged transition to Tla'amin adulthood.

In addition to rigid spatial segregation based on sex, age, and race, the materials, hard impermeable corners, specialized rooms, and separation from natural spaces added to the foreign, institutional experience of space for Indigenous children and youth. In their 1995 chapter, "Place Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self," psychologists Harold Proshansky, Abbe Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff describe the ways that individuals create "place identity"<sup>56</sup> throughout their life cycle. Place identity, or "rootedness,"<sup>57</sup> is a concept most human beings take little time to reflect upon and consciously create. Regardless, Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff describe how a feeling of security in one's own knowledge and place in familiar environments operate in the socialization of children, where physical and social environmental experience are

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<sup>54</sup> Miller, *Residential Schools*, 193-194.

<sup>55</sup> Haig-Brown, *Surviving*, 51.

<sup>56</sup> Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe K. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff, "Place Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self," in *Giving Places Meaning*, ed. David Canter (Toronto: Academic Press, 1995), 89.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

intertwined, and help to create an individual's well-being and self-identity.<sup>58</sup> The consequence of disruption "is that extreme variations in the physical environment experienced by a person may indeed threaten the self-identity of the individual."<sup>59</sup> In familiar spaces, individuals learn mastery over their environment, the appropriate ways to behave and use space between themselves and others, and ultimately, "place-identity cognitions are positively valenced in that they either define directly who the person is, or they do so indirectly by defending him and protecting him from those settings and properties that threaten who he is and what he wants to be."<sup>60</sup> The physical spaces of residential school, and the alien rules of anti-family socialization implicit in the daily environments of the school, cleaved away the cultural identities of Tla'amin children.



Figure 4.2. Indian School, Sechelt, BC, circa 1920<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 91-96.

<sup>59</sup> Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff, "Place Identity," 96.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

<sup>61</sup> "Indian School, Sechelt, BC," image, from BC Archives. B-0445, HP027748; 193501-001, 1920- .

*Residential School: Divided Places, Divided Generations*

As children and young people began to navigate and master new cultural and spatial rules at school, they were alienated from the ways of their parents, and literally felt out of place. A Tla'amin Elder who grew up in the 1950s explained,

There's a strong infiltration of the Church within our culture. Remember when, the best way I can describe it to you, you have, let's say this is the old, old, generation. And you've got another generation, another generation, another generation, another generation. What happened was, just before the residential school, there was a little bit of separation. Because this generation here, was starting to go to the residential school, okay the succeeding generation, this generation, these were partly in residential school, now these ones were in there. Okay, then you get another generation, which was different from those generations. But this is what I call the Elders that were attached to the time of the old ways. The Elders now that we have, is the generation that was in residential school. So that is where the difference becomes. So you get a lot of filtered things.<sup>62</sup>

This Elder describes how some differences between generations began with the commitment of some Tla'amin to the ways of the Catholic Church; over time residential school “filtered” many of the “old ways.” Each of these generations felt removed or “separated” from the one before.

A disjointed feeling of lacking place in the world is a common experience of residential school survivors, and was also seen by their parents as problematic in sharing relationships and cultural identity. In *Shingwauk's Vision*, one mother lamented, “When they are too long at school they won't have anything to do with us; they want to be with white people; they grow away from us.”<sup>63</sup> Or, as John Tootoosis famously said, residential school survivors were “being put between two walls in a room and left hanging in the middle.”<sup>64</sup> A Tla'amin Elder born much later, in the early 1960s, gave this assessment of residential schools' effect on intergenerational communication:

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<sup>62</sup> P7, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011, transcript, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Sarah Jane Esau as quoted in Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 233.

<sup>64</sup> John Tootoosis, from his biography by Jean Goodman and Norma Sluman, *John Tootoosis*, 2nd ed. (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1984), 106, as quoted in Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 429.

Kids got everything they were taught at school, was downgrading it and dissing our culture, so they came home and didn't think that all that was important. So the kids now have no respect because their parents came home from school and they weren't taught anything. Erodes our own peoples' morals because they come home from school totally removed from family spirit, from family dinner, to do all the fish together, making sure everyone has all the wood, make sure everyone is going to be okay for the winter. They were all broken up and we didn't have that community spirit anymore. Everybody became individualized and look after your own self.<sup>65</sup>

As a witness to residential school's damage to intergenerational relationships, he saw the loss of culture, as well as their lack of respect for parents. Residential schools not only affected those who attended, but "our own peoples" and the entire family and community. This individual benefitted from escaping residential school but found it hard to share particular Tla'amin knowledge with his peers. He explained,

I just grew up in my family because there were no other kids around when I was growing up. So I grew up hearing a lot of things other kids didn't hear because they were away in residential school. All the people that know what I'm talking about are all dying and gone. And now the kids don't know what I'm talking about. I feel alone. That's the exact job of the residential school. ... I never went there, but they washed it all away from the other kids and the kids come back and I have this knowledge and who am I going to give it to? They don't care about it. So that's exactly what they did, they killed the Indian.<sup>66</sup>

More aggressively than the Elder who discussed differences between successive generations, this individual felt the division between himself and his peers, and how children who went to residential school were taught to purposefully distance themselves from the teachings of their Elders. Additionally, the "community spirit" was severed in these relationships through the time that children spent away from Sliammon, time that could have been spent in the community, learning "respect ... morals ... making sure everyone is going to be okay for the winter,"<sup>67</sup> and many other important Tla'amin teachings. Additionally, this Tla'amin Elder uses the familiar metaphor of the lake or river in bathing ceremonies, "they washed it all away from the other kids," ascribing a

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<sup>65</sup> P8, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 4, 2015, transcript, 5–6.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 6.

power to the residential school experience similar to that of other coming-of-age ceremonies. This version of coming of age resulted in cultural death, as opposed to new life, at least in this brief discussion.

Another family who came into intergenerational conflict about residential school attendance mediated this relationship through territorial space. In an attempt to prevent her introduction into the Western education system, her grandmother continued her granddaughter's Indigenous education within the context of Tla'amin territory, but not within the family home. The granddaughter found her experience so different from other children she knew in the 1950s, who lived with "so many kids in the house, I used to find it so different, they're speaking English, they're watching T.V." <sup>68</sup> Her time was structured more by her grandmother's desire to pass on cultural, environmental teachings and language:

I was just starting school, I was 7 when I started school. My mom fought my granny for me to go to school, my granny said it was really bad, she didn't like it. My mom fought for two years in order to get me to go to school. Always fighting, they're going to take me away, saying the cops were going to come get me, my granny didn't believe it. We went to Grace Harbor, hell with this granny said. <sup>69</sup>

Her grandmother attempted to keep their mobility high, and eschewed efforts to limit her granddaughter's territorial mobility. However, at the same time, this grandmother also restricted her granddaughter's ability to learn from her Elders and adults like many other Tla'amin did. Her grandmother purported that children could not understand adult conversation and therefore must, within a house, segregate themselves in another room. Thus it would appear that for this grandmother, like the women who undertook a territorialized puberty rite in the summertime, the most valuable teaching that could be shared with her grandchild came not from the classroom or the home, but instead from a strong connection to the territories of the Tla'amin. <sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Emily August interview by Karen Galligos, October 5, 1996, MIS 42.43 Audiocassette 42 and 43 MIS.42.43.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 11.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

Another Tla'amin family eschewed residential school learning for several generations through grandparent intervention that maximized the use of Tla'amin territory for safety from colonial authorities and learning. As a young boy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, this Elder avoided residential school, as did his parents, through the intervention of their grandparents:

At my mother's age, she didn't go, my Dad didn't go. Her parents, or grandparents, they kept them away. My great-grandfather use to take my Mom, they said up to Theodosia ... they'd say, "come on you guys, we're going up to Theodosia to smoke salmon." They'd go up there for a couple of weeks and came back and everybody was gone.<sup>71</sup>

Through the strategic use of parts of their territory untouchable by colonial authorities, this Tla'amin family was able to subvert the educational expectations of the Church and State and continue their own patterns of education.

In Sliammon's past, control was maintained and imposed by community Elders and leaders. However, over the time period in which successive generations of Tla'amin attended day and then residential schools, the community adopted sleeping patterns that represented more individual territory and power for children. Adults maintained control of the house, mediated through their sleeping position, which was at the centre of the house, with the rest of the family in one room, or, if in the kitchen, with parents near the door towards the end of the 1940s.<sup>72</sup> For example, in 1943 or 1944, one Tla'amin Elder slept in a narrow bed with all of his brothers and sisters in one room, while their mother slept on a larger bed in the living room.<sup>73</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, families made room for

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<sup>71</sup> P9, 2015, transcript, 15. He later elaborated when asked how his great-grandfather helped his mom escape residential school, saying, "taking her away from the reserve. Always finding something to do. Go to Harwood Island to pick berries, or Theodosia was the better place because the police and the Priest wouldn't go, they didn't have a boat to go up there. They'd go to Grace Harbour. That's what I was told anyway," 20.

<sup>72</sup> P4 2011, P15, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011; Bennie Charlie, interview by Dana Lepofsky and Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, June 24, 2013; P13, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 26, 2011; P3, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 2011; P1, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 5, 2011; Charlie Bob, interview by Brandon Peters, August 8, 2011, Powell River Museum Video Interview, Powell River Historical Museum and Archives, Powell River, BC. In summer shacks, everyone shared one room.

<sup>73</sup> Bennie Charlie, interview by Dana Lepofsky and Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, June 24, 2013.

both adults and children to sleep in their own rooms.<sup>74</sup> This transition was largely complete by the 1950s. An Elder shared his own story, saying, “as far as I remember growing up, I haven’t had my own rooms, as well as my brother. And the other brother, he left. And the other brother, he got his room. And then I got my own room all by myself. That was in the mid ’50s, or the late ’50s.”<sup>75</sup> By the 1950s, many Tla’amin families saw to it that individualized bedrooms were in place for their children.

When asked about his housing growing up, one Tla’amin Elder replied that he had little experience with the house of his childhood (1940s to 1950s):

The house was quite adequate actually we had a big living room, a fairly big kitchen and two bedrooms. But we were never home anyway. The only one that was home was our youngest sister. ... All of the other ones went to residential school. I spent eleven years in residential school. But, what are, I guess the only time we really come together at home and be crowded was probably in the, during the Christmas holidays when we were all home.<sup>76</sup>

Besides disrupting the expected life cycle, language, gender relationships, value system, and personal emotions of young children, the residential school system undercut the educational system the Tla’amin already utilized to keep their society and people strong. One female Elder, when interviewed by a community member in 1996, reported that she did not know if her mother gathered medicines, as there was no way for her to know: “the trouble with boarding schools, you can’t see everything that is going on at home because you are in school. You miss all that with your parents, especially since I was gone since I was four.”<sup>77</sup> Another Elder’s comments suggest the format of learning in a residential school also undermined the method of learning amongst his own people: “I went to residential school and I missed quite a bit, it was told but the – I just didn’t listen too

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<sup>74</sup> P4, 2011; P15, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 9, 2011; Bennie Charlie interview by Dana Lepofsky and Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, June 24, 2013; P13, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, July 16, 2011; P3, 2011; P1, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, August 5, 2011.

<sup>75</sup> P9, 2015, 16.

<sup>76</sup> P5, 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Janie Adams, interview by Evan Adams and Kerri Timothy, May 13, 1996, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS.16.doc Audiocassette MIS 16 MIS.16.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 16.

carefully at that time.”<sup>78</sup> Many people in Sliammon who attended residential schools felt that they missed what “is going at home,” ways of learning, actual teachings, and time with family.

*Residential School: Taking Away Tla’amin Places, Taking Away Tla’amin Learning*

Residential school displacement undermined Tla’amin ceremonies integral to Tla’amin education. One woman who was born in 1903 described her own grandfather’s bathing practice in the river. He was very dedicated to the practice, and in comparison she called herself “good for nothing”:

It was just started breaking daylight, he heard the birds, the birds were chattering, so he got up and he went and started digging, then daylight came, the sun was out, you can see the mountain there, it is called XaXanis. ... When the sun started coming up there, then he would go home and have his breakfast, about 10 or 11 o’clock is when the sun comes up there, that is when he went home to eat breakfast, when he finished eating then you would go and bathe in the river. That is why he was so strong, it was because of his Ta7ow, his teachings, don’t use the tub to bathe, he would say, go straight to the river, cleanse your body, your bad skin and bad habits will drift down the river, if you go to the river, he cleared his trail down the road to the river and that is where he goes to bathe. The trail has become so muddy because he was always down there, his feet were caked with mud when he is going down, and it is rocky there too, it got so muddy because he was always going down there, like a bear goes down. He did that every day when he finished digging in his garden then he would go and bathe at the river and he was old, you think I would do that. I am no good for nothing, my great-grandfather was very strong.<sup>79</sup>

This dedicated practice continued from around the middle of the nineteenth century into the first years of the twentieth, when this Tla’amin person recalled it. However, these practices took new forms, and young people had different expectations of themselves even as early as the 1910s and 1920s. This woman, whose grandfather was so devoted to

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<sup>78</sup> Joe Paul Sr., interview with Willy Bob, Henry Bob, and Hewkin Joe Mitchell, by Maynard Harry, November 22, 1995, trans. Karen Galligos, MIS.7.8A.doc Audiocassette 7 and 8, MIS.7.8A.doc, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Rose Mitchell and Elizabeth Harry, interviewed by Randy Bouchard, December 1973, trans. Connie Wilson OTH.9 Audicassette # OTH9, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 9.



spiritual bathing, described the difference between her great-grandfather's practice and the practice of her other family members.

First of all, her mother's practice when she became a woman was to develop a beauty regimen, emphasized over the seclusion or other powers of puberty rights she may have sought earlier in Tla'amin history: "It was when she turned into a woman, she fixed herself up, her face, eyebrows, her calves, all dolled up, for six days she fixed herself up when she turned into a woman; that is why she looked like that."<sup>80</sup> However, the woman and her peers refused to accept even these teachings from her mother, or to participate in a modified ceremony, let alone seclusion:

I wouldn't listen myself, I don't like to what they call pluck your eyebrows long time ago, I used to get hurt when someone did it and my great grandmother was telling me that I can't just have 1 eyebrow plucked in those days. No one did, I was going to do that to Sue but she didn't want to, you can see, it doesn't grow, didn't want anyone to touch her eyebrows. People have lots to say on how they were growing up, I seen, they wanted to teach us but we were bad, we did not listen, even the young boys have their Ta7ow for young boys when they start to change. ... That is what they told us and we don't do that, that is bad, I guess we were bad.<sup>81</sup>

Although schooling is not reflected directly in these discussions of the ceremony, from 1909 onward Tla'amin young people were removed for various time periods and placed away from their home or even territorial environments, and instructed in an immersive environment that had no Tla'amin cultural, social, or pedagogical values within it. Despite efforts of parents and grandparents, Tla'amin young people, with their experiences away from their parents, in an environment that directly undermined their sense of belonging to their community and parents, were not compelled by duty or expectation to participate in the education their Elders offered, and many, as can be seen from the above account, were uninterested in following even modified versions of these coming-of-age rituals.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Regardless, Tla'amin Elders and parents sought ways to impart their knowledge and values. These ceremonies took different forms through the various generations of the twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s, although a stream or lake was the preferred and historical place for ceremonial bathing, modifications were allowed:

if you are far away from the river, my mom always had a big tub outside of the house with a tap outside. We'd take turns bathing in cold water, every morning, scrubbing ourselves with cedar boughs, all over so you won't catch a bad cold hey. ... They say if you keep it up for a year, you got it made. Just like trying to reach the goal of your life. And some fail, they only go to six months and forget it, today I don't think anybody's carried it on.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the use of a tub, this woman's experience included the significant elements of the water, the early morning, and the cedar. The length of time over which the ceremony continued, six months to a year, was significant to her in teaching her how to reach for goals in life. Lastly, she commented that she noticed subsequent generations did not continue this practice, and her Elders played a pivotal role in her own Tla'amin education: "This is real interesting if the younger kids would only listen. What the elders taught as your growing up, the first thing they taught you were your manners, to behave and all that and to respect your mom and dad, respect the elders mostly and when you reach the age of thirteen, you leave your childhood back. Don't turn look back, that is when you start your bathing."<sup>83</sup> The need for elder family member involvement and the continued symbolic use of the outside elements of the water and cedar, and potentially the rising sun and other environmental signs of morning, were maintained as referential and important to the Tla'amin experience of personal growth and education. Despite this continuity in symbolism, this Tla'amin woman acknowledges that intergenerational divides continued unabated to challenge Tla'amin teaching and education through ceremony.

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<sup>82</sup> Agnes McGee, interview by Karen Galligos and Connie Wilson, July 24, 1998, trans. Connie Wilson, MIS.48.49.50.51 Audiocassette 48, 49, 50, and 51. MIS.48.49.50.51.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 61.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

*Residential School: Finding Time, Sharing Territory*

Elders did their best to support the continuation of their system of learning and relating by working within the physical constraints of the residential school. They were very concerned about the implications of the loss of their own education system. One woman recalls how her female Elders emphasized to her the importance of knowing their land:

she really pushed me to listen good to what our first peoples used to do, talking about our leaders, taking care of each other. This land is going to have lots of white people living here, your children will be poor if you don't teach them where they come from if they go somewhere and find a husband or wife somewhere far away. They are going to think this is not their land anymore. It would be like disowning them, sending them off from their relatives and family. That is what papa and all of them talked about all the time.<sup>84</sup>

To combat what they saw as quickly disappearing spatially grounded identity, “where they come from ... their land,” Tla’amin Elders insisted as well as they could, that young Tla’amin “listen” reverentially to their ancestors, “our first peoples.” In these words, they sought to tie Tla’amin young people to their past and their territories, acknowledging that the spaces in these territories gave Tla’amin an important sense of identity that could moor them in a big world.

Another strategy used to ensure Tla’amin youth received important teaching from their Elders despite the time restraints of the school year, was to maximize the summertime for travelling within Tla’amin territory. In the 1940s, one young man’s grandparents subverted the school schedule entirely and took him out of his residential school during the school year. However, most Tla’amin youth in residential school missed out on both the places and kin relationships connected to travelling in seasons other than the summer:

It was many years later I was in residential school – my grandparents got down there. ... They took me out of school, I had to get permission, so many hours and we walked down and my grandfather said, “this is my sister,” but I knew he had a sister that lived in Homalco, Church House and that’s a big family. ... And from

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<sup>84</sup> Annie Dominic and Dave Dominic, interviewed by Karen Galligos, April 14, 2003, Tiswkat.3 Annie\_Dave\_Domnic03.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 13.

that my grandfather started telling me how our relatives are. That was an eye-opener. Then after that my grandfather said, “get on the boat,” we went on a cruise. I went to Church House, met my grandfather’s sister and his family, made that tour all the way to Campbell River, Comox, Nanaimo, also to the Island, Duncan, Victoria. My Granny was well known. ... Half way across from Victoria to Vancouver, we sailed, we were escorted and then they turned around. We went to Squamish and then we went to see my mom’s people, then we went to North Vancouver, Capilano, met some people there, then Burrard. Then we’d trucked over to Mission. They took us up there, there was only one little train, we went to Chilliwack. So they took me on tour before they passed on, showed me where I was from.<sup>85</sup>

This man’s granny was “well known,” and the travelling was the usual Tla’amin seasonal route. And yet, the cruise was novel to him, and his grandparents made a specific request to the residential school to ensure that he experienced it. He acknowledged that it was his only opportunity “before they passed on.”

Another example of a young woman’s coming-of-age ceremonies demonstrates how Elders squeezed important learning in the children’s new restricted time where they could. In the late 1950s a young woman underwent her coming-of-age ceremonies when she was physically at home to partake in the immersive experience:

Another one of the greatest experiences that I had with my grandmother ... when I turned, I guess I was 13 or 12. I was still in Sechelt School when I started my period and that’s when you become a woman. It was December, they came home for Christmas and we were living by the river there and my mom told her that I had become a woman. So she made me go up the logging road with her and we got a whole bunch of cedar boughs and she said she’d be down in the morning to see me and she had put it by the house. She came, waking me up really early in the morning, before breaking daylight. ... [My Grandmother] had an ax in her hand and there was so much ice on the river, it was December, so she had to make a hole for us to get in the water and she bathed me in the water and she told me not to holler or cry because it’s gonna be for your own good when you grow up that your gonna know how to work with your hands and she says for you not to be a mean person, be a good person, be kind to other people, you will know how to harvest your own food and to have a strong mind. ... And when you come back home in June, she said you’re going to spend the whole summer with me, you’re not going to be allowed to go, you know, I used to like to go play with Annie and

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<sup>85</sup> P3, 2015, 13.

there was Maggie George, Maggie Williams, other people, Elizabeth Blaney, I couldn't hang around with them that summer. So that whole summer when I came home, we used to row to Harwood Island, row to Savary Island, you know preparing all these foods, picking berries, drying them and come back. Then she would say "go give this to this person and that person." So I think that's where I learned, you know, to care, to really keep it on my mind that one day it's gonna be other ones to lose, but I'm teaching you, so that's one thing I'm really grateful for, what she done.<sup>86</sup>

Although her time was constrained by her attendance at the residential school, her grandmother maintained important elements of the ceremony, including seclusion from her friends, ceremonial bathing, and cedar brushing, and then giving the fruits of her labour to community members upon its conclusion.<sup>87</sup> Instead of asking her granddaughter to be secluded within their home, she brought the young woman to territorial spaces, secluding her from her playmates, and teaching her the skills and about the places she had missed while in school.

Several Tla'amin families squeezed territorial education into the limited time around the residential school schedule. Another who went home in the late 1950s from residential school explained, "when I used to come home from the residential school part of it was sitting on the floor listening to your grandparents."<sup>88</sup> Other families also made the most of the summer. One contemporary Elder's mom, likely in the 1930s, left immediately with her family for the duration of the summertime:

All summer, she'd travel with her family. After school her parents were waiting for her on the beach. They'd take off all summer and be gone right till September. She was told by them of what things happened, in Grace Harbour, all the stories of the surrounding area, seen through the eyes of her Granny. Grandparents taking their kids out to their territory.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Phyllis Dominick, interview with Ramona Dominic, by Evan Adams and Kerri Timothy, May 16, 1996, MIS.20 Audiocassette MIS 20. MIS.20.A.doc, transcript, Sliammon Treaty Office, Sliammon, BC, 23–24.

<sup>87</sup> Homer Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1955), 152. An aspect of puberty rites in the nineteenth century amongst all Coast Salish, according to Homer Barnett, was "a 'calling of the people,'" which meant a distribution of property to invited guests.

<sup>88</sup> P7, 2011, 1.

<sup>89</sup> P1, interview with P2 by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 1, 2015, transcript, 7.

Many Tla'amin families were making the most out of the short time they now had with their children, bringing them to the places, specifically to the home with their grandparents and to their territorial sites that would maximize their own Tla'amin education.

### *Conclusion*

Despite difficult experiences in residential school and the efforts of the Tla'amin to overcome challenges to impart their Indigenous knowledge, by the mid-twentieth century, Tla'amin parents were committed to the benefits of Western education. Across Canada, after World War II, integration became increasingly popular. Tla'amin children were able to attend a local public school where they could mix with non-Aboriginal residents. In the 1950s and 1960s many Tla'amin families wanted to maintain a connection to the Euro-Canadian community.<sup>90</sup>

No, I made sure of that. They went to, I don't know if I should be proud of it or not but my boys went to Assumption [Catholic school] over here in Westview [Powell River] for one term, and that was it. I tried ... ways and means of moving them out of there and putting, when we found out that they could go to public school anywhere, then we started making arrangements for them to go to public school here in Wildwood because if they're, we thought, my wife and I felt if they're going to have to make in the mainstream of society then they had to start with the rest of the people in Powell River, rather than be separated for such a long time in their life.<sup>91</sup>

In this view, it was not just residential school's separation from their own families but also its segregation from the wider world that Tla'amin feared. Tla'amin literally fought for their right to participation in these institutions. One young person in the 1960s remembers, "I attended... the day school here and all of a sudden they moved us to Assumption, and all of these white kids were there staring at us like, 'Holy shit, this is what Indians looked like.' The first day I got into a fight... from then on we kept

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<sup>90</sup> This was a complicated and messy process, described in Michael Marker, "Indigenous Resistance and Racist Schooling on the Borders of Empires: Coast Salish Cultural Survival," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009): 757–772.

<sup>91</sup> Mitchell, MIS 3, 9.

fighting till they got used of us... but it took quite a while.”<sup>92</sup> Tla’amin people, like Chief Tom Timothy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, believed in and fought for their place amongst the people of Powell River and the “mainstream of society.”

Throughout the 1960s, Tla’amin puberty rites continued, maintaining aspects of Tla’amin environmental awareness, although they were challenged by time constraints and possibly the loss of strong intergenerational relationships. As a young man in the 1960s one individual had access to the ceremony intermittently through his own father:

My dad took me out a few times when he did it himself. Like the fall time or the spring time when the air is kind of crisp. A nice sunny day but the air is really brisk, so once in a while, if I didn’t want to go in, he’d throw me in. He was trying to toughen me up. He would get some cedar branches and he would sit in the water and you whip yourself with that.<sup>93</sup>

For this individual, the ceremony marked certain times of year outside of school, tied him closer to his Dad through their shared experience, and demonstrated to him that to become a man was to become “tough.” However, the meaning of the ceremony was more important to this individual than this short quotation might suggest. He developed a relationship with not only his father but also the location his father selected for their “morning blessing.”<sup>94</sup> “There’s some real nice pools in there, good fast water in there, dip in there. There’s certain areas you can do that, and that was one of the areas and another one was you could go up a little further up. I think there was maybe three areas that you went for your morning blessing, it was a ritual you would go and try and toughen up, meditate and cleanse your soul and body.”<sup>95</sup> This relationship transformed both the man and the place. The “nice pools” enriched with spiritual power were not regular pools but “certain” select sites for ceremony with “good fast water.” In turn, the men who “dip in there” through this practice became blessed and cleansed, in both “soul and body.”<sup>96</sup> These men could meditate anywhere; however, they chose particular pools appropriate

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<sup>92</sup> P1, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Peters, 11.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 11–12.

<sup>96</sup> Peters, 11–12.

for this ceremonial relationship, and in doing so both the men and the pools gained new meaning and depth through this relationship.<sup>97</sup>

Despite these efforts to encircle residential school learning with solid Tla'amin cultural education, particularly in the territories of the Tla'amin during the summertime, many Tla'amin mourn the loss of additional cultural values disrupted by the residential school. For example, one Tla'amin person growing up in the 1960s and 1970s explained,

Our kids come from parents that were away at residential school, and they were not really good listeners when they got home because they were taught to not listen to Granny's stories. They were taught that, you know, what she was doing was backwards. So, the young people, when they got home, they didn't care about those old stories. They didn't care about the lessons they would learn from those old stories, and how that makes you grow up to be who you are because of the people that you came from. And they didn't know where they came from because they were not taught about their family. They were only home for two months and then they were sent away again. So, they never really got to feel that really big group dynamics because everybody was all split up in the summer because they were all gone berry-picking. They were all gone to seasonal jobs and that. So, in the summer times all the families were broken up again, so they didn't ever get that community feeling, the feeling of family.<sup>98</sup>

Physically, residential school displaced youth from their communities, the Tla'amin education available at home and in their territories, and their relationship to older generations. Although some Elders and parents attempted to revise ceremonies and territorial learning to match the requirements of the school year, and these ceremonies and learning continued to occur in meaningful ways, subsequent generations could not regain this loss of time and place. What was once repetitive daily and seasonal behaviour in familiar sites was misplaced. An Elder lamented, "We've pretty much lost our, well I can't remember even having houses and stuff or traditional things, mostly the things that our younger generation, learned from school. And they were taught by other Nations, and

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<sup>97</sup> August, 4. This is not to say that Tla'amin people did not literally transform their landscape, sometimes for spiritual purposes as well. For example, Emily August told Karen Galligos in a 1996 interview that around the time of the fire of 1918 most of the Sliammon beaches were man-made, and that men and women moved rocks to the point for their bathing or other activities.

<sup>98</sup> P8, transcript, 13.



other peoples, about carving and stuff like that.”<sup>99</sup> The externalization of education from the home environment to imposed foreign settings – and ultimately the removal of children from the community to structurally alien housing and educational institutions – both amplified and embodied the psychological barriers put in place by the teachings in these institutions to Indigenous educational efforts by the adults in the children’s community. While older generations attempted to fight back by adapting the activities, spaces, and timeframes of their teachings and ceremonies to the restrictions placed on the children by the schools, ultimately the impact of residential school education prevented many children from receiving any real form of Indigenous education, and this loss of survival skills, knowledge, and cultural unity continued to negatively impact subsequent generations.

Haig-Brown’s discussion of survival at the Kamloops Indian Residential School addresses the dysfunction that infiltrated successive generations of residential school survivors. Haig-Brown asserts, “particularly in the 1950s, the influence of alcohol and the coming to parenthood of a generation of people, who through attendance at the residential school had little opportunity to learn parenting skills, created some unhealthy situations for children.”<sup>100</sup> This is true at Sliammon as elsewhere across Canada. The incredible onslaught of Euro-Canadian settler colonialism through schooling included the spatial reconfiguration of the Tla’amin home, and the intergenerational relationships within, that once sustained Tla’amin education, including value systems, identity, purpose, and culture. However, despite these challenges, Tla’amin parents and grandparents sought to maintain aspects of their own education system, working around the schedules of day and residential schools, and using symbolic elements of environmentally based ceremonies when necessary. Instead of relying on the spaces of the home, which had also become more segregated as the individualism of residential schools undermined the cooperation between generations that once happened at home, Tla’amin instead used their other territorial spaces more heavily to ensure that the “place-identity” of Tla’amin young people continued into the future.

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<sup>99</sup> P6, interview by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 18.

<sup>100</sup> Haig-Brown, *Surviving*, 37.

## **Conclusion**

The methodology of this dissertation, its question, and the enforcement of anonymity of many interviewees serve certain goals, but unfortunately also contribute to obscuring the individual experiences associated with living in Sliammon throughout the twentieth century. Many individual stories do shine, through. There are parents who worked hard to adapt houses to fit their families' needs and wants, there are individuals who missed out on family events because they attended residential school, there are people who had close relationships with their grandparents, others who had limited access to Elders, there are people who left their territory permanently, and there are others who were raised purposefully by Elders and now feel isolated in their cultural knowledge. Some people had all of these experiences and more.

There is no longhouse in Sliammon today, and there is no agreement on the historical association of longhouses with certain ceremonial activities. A physical and metaphorical break with the past occurred, and this dissertation has sought to examine how this physical change took place, and what impact it had on the sharing of cultural knowledge that was intimately connected with Indigenous longhouse architecture. My understanding from reading Sliammon's oral history archives, and speaking with contemporary Elders, which is hopefully demonstrated here, is that there exist knowledge, stories, and teachings that simply cannot be remembered. Interviews done by Tla'amin people and researchers in the 1960s and 1970s offer stories and details that do not resonate with Tla'amin people of today. Residential schools, Church teachings, and the restructuring of the Tla'amin longhouse into shacks and then Ladner homes disrupted Indigenous teaching. Extended families and different generations no longer had access to one another in the same way, and physical barriers kept them from interacting regularly, closely, and without distractions. Some of these barriers were within the changing house itself, including the transition to single-family houses and then the segregation of

additional bedrooms. The introduction of the residential school transported children out of their home environment into alien surroundings whose very architecture of segregated spaces imposed standards of gender, age, and family separation, as well as reinforcing colonialist and racist hierarchical values. The removal of children to this foreign and alienating physical environment presented further barriers to family and community cohesiveness and the development of healthy individual and cultural identities, in addition to restricting time for Indigenous education and indoctrinating children with messages that degraded their culture and undermined the authority of the Elders and their teachings.

Though dealing with different people in a different territory, this dissertation builds on the more general work of historian J. R. Miller and education Professor Celia Haig-Brown, who showed that although some Tla'amin people took specific positive lessons from their residential school experience, its foreign and industrial use of space added to its devastating impact on changing relationships between Tla'amin people and their Indigenous knowledge. This included a subtle shift in the way that young girls in particular were turned into young Tla'amin women. For many, the residential school experience for young girls was possibly aligned positively to the previous practices of isolation and personal purity expected of young girls undertaking their rite of passage. In the field of Indigenous education, this dissertation includes a historical dimension such as that of the works by educator Marie Battiste, demonstrating the ways that Tla'amin people sought to maintain their Indigenous education systems in the face of the challenges of colonialism. It elucidates the methods of Indigenous education, including embedded teachings through specific spaces and sites, intergenerational knowledge sharing, and the need for more directed territorial education, as well as more deliberate strategies for intergenerational education.

While there is always a risk of essentialism and romanticism when Indigenous peoples are connected with their architecture as a reductive illustration of their worldview, this dissertation instead demonstrates that real, everyday physical spaces and how they are used impact how people in general learn cultural knowledge and lifeways. My overarching concern with this dissertation was to caution and inspire all readers to be

aware of and mindful about the spaces we create, their purposes, and what kinds of relationships and knowledge we hope to build in those spaces. The first two chapters focus on some of these structural meanings of houses for the Tla'amin, including as outward displays of status, and, within the homes, as sites in which Tla'amin people may have practiced ceremonies but also ensured compliance within their own homes, amongst guests, particularly. Through the adherence of the members of the household to social expectations, territorial control within the house also added to the status of the head of the household and its inhabitants. When longhouses were no longer used, young people were less obedient to their Elders, and individual Tla'amin lives and their nuclear families became much more important than relationships with extended families had once been.

While much of this reads like Tla'amin cultural and Indigenous knowledge loss, the dissertation also reveals the ways that Tla'amin maintained and nurtured their lifeways in the face of changing home environments. Ceremonies were adapted for ease of use, and those ceremonies connected to the Tla'amin territory beyond the home were fiercely protected and retained. Families found ways around the barriers imposed by their new houses. Some did this by ensuring that at least one child was raised by the grandparents, and in this way designated one family member as knowledge keeper and educator. Elders and grandparents brought children on specific journeys to ensure familiarity with territorial spaces and extended relatives. Because these territorial spaces took on greater significance as places to ensure Tla'amin knowledge continued, the positive outcome was that Tla'amin territory still remains, and alongside the *Ta'ow* within the people, Tla'amin lifeways will be in constant renewal as the people's relationship with their land and cultural teachings continues.

Recent scholarship from historian Colin Osmond describes the important role of communal buildings beginning with longhouses and, moving into the twentieth century, including “churches, houses, barns, and community halls.”<sup>1</sup> In Osmond's estimation, these buildings offered a way for Tla'amin loggers to express masculine identity through contributions to their community. This aspect of masculine identity expression through

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Osmond, “Giant Trees, Iron Men: Twentieth Century Coast Salish Loggers and Colonial Masculinity” (unpublished master's thesis, June 20, 2016, University of Saskatchewan), 5.

communal spaces is analogous to the use of ceremonial longhouses to express status and may be seen as a response to the loss of these structures, and the continued use of new communal buildings expresses the need for spaces where multiple of generations could share information, knowledge, and education after the loss of the longhouse. Particularly in the construction of the Church, Tla'amin loggers were able to create a space sanctioned by colonial authorities that could also serve community purposes of expression, gathering, and teaching.<sup>2</sup>

More recently, the opening of the new Government House<sup>3</sup> in Sliammon coincided with the implementation of Tla'amin self-governance. Tla'amin Nation hegus Clint Williams emphasized the presence of totem poles in front of the building as “the symbol [that] we will take on those challenges and improve the lives of all Tla'amin people.”<sup>4</sup> The focus remained on the totem poles, although there was an official opening for Government House. Potentially, these totem poles are a less controversial reference to the Tla'amin past and future than a longhouse design might have been, although the Tla'amin carvers who created them relied on experts from other communities.<sup>5</sup> The building itself is seen to lack cultural expression: “It is not cedar ... it is tin. ... It's a glass house! ... What's happened to our cedar? We are cedar people!”<sup>6</sup> proclaimed one Elder. Although Government House represents a new era in Tla'amin history, including reclaiming freedom to express culture in whichever way the community sees fit, the design of Government House does not resonate with the historical past of Tla'amin longhouses. If its departure from longhouse design is intentional, this point is not lost on at least a few Tla'amin Elders.

Tla'amin people continue to *seek ways to be themselves*, and these efforts are not new political acts. They are deliberate reflections back to the future their ancestors sought for their people. Recently, a Tla'amin Elder described how the community has used

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 30–31. Additionally, Tla'amin loggers used this opportunity to lobby the Indian Agent for building tools that could be repurposed following the construction of the Church.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Neh motl* newspaper of Sliammon, the house is interchangeably referred to as Governance House and Government House.

<sup>4</sup> *Neh motl*, May 2016, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Pieta Woolley, “Still Here, Standing Strong,” *Neh motl*, April 2016, 6.

<sup>6</sup> P10, personal conversation, June 12, 2016.

university education, and will use longhouses, to return their community to a vision formed long ago:

Two young students, they went about, started doing sessions with the community Elders, and with me, one-on-one, focus groups and all that, and, we came up with a community plan and an economic action plan. Community, this is what they painted on the wall, they painted that picture. ... What's the plan to get to that, uh, uh, vision that we have. ... So, we get done, all that done, and that was the basis for our people to say, "we got to get out of the Indian Act." Yay! ...

... Next one was we've got to get our longhouses back. That was the second goal. We've got to get totem poles, we've got to get this, we've got to get that. This was all in the plan. ...

... No time for healing. Finally now, we are going into self-governance. ... That's what makes me happy now. Because we're creating our own laws, our own Constitution, our own financial administration and all of that. ... Finally, I'm smiling. ... Now is the time for the young people to step in there, step up to the plate, fill in those windows.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 5.1. Hegus Clint Williams Opens Governance House, April 9, 2013<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> P5, interview with P7, by Omeasoo Wāhpāsiw, October 2, 2015, transcript, 12.

<sup>8</sup> "Hegus Clint Williams Opens Governance House, April 9, 2013," photo, from the Sliammon First Nation Facebook Page, *Treaty Effective Date Celebrations*, April 9, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/SliammonFirstNation/photos/a.764522790351960.1073741828.163389967131915/764523367018569/?type=3&theater>.

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